

CHEETAL

A Journal of
Wild Life Preservation Society of India



VOL. 5

OCTOBER, 1962

No. 1

Wild Life Preservation Society of India.

I. The aims and objects of the Society are as follows:

- (a) To promote interest in the preservation and conservation of all forms of animal life among the youth of the country.
- (b) To assist in enforcing the game and arms rules and to bring to the notice of the authorities any infringements of the same
- (c) To advise and help Government and the District authorities in the formation, maintenance and protection of Sanctuaries and National Parks.
- (d) To raise funds for the carrying out of the above aims and objects.
- (e) To carry on any other activities which will serve the above objectives, including publicity and propaganda and the issue of a journal.
- (f) To assist members of the Society in obtaining shooting and fishing facilities and facilities for viewing and photographing wild life etc.

II The Society has, upto date:—

Patrons	...	19	Educational members	...	20
Life members	...	56	Professional members	...	39
Ordinary members	...	161	Honorary members	...	10
Institutional members	...	7	Student members	...	101
Affiliated members	...	8	Family Members	...	2

Total Membership is 423.

The Society's funds stand, so far, at Rs. 8,500/-

III. Office Bearers and Members of the Executive Committee.

President:—His Highness The Maharaja of Nabha.

Executive Vice President:—Shri S. S. Negi.

Vice Presidents:—Shri R. L. Holdsworth.

Dr. Bains Prashad.

S. Ranbir Singh.

His Highness the Maharaja of Kotah.

Shri T. N. Srivastava,

Hony. Secretary:—Shri Gurkirat Singh Mann.

Asstt. Hony. Secretary:—Shri S. K. Sangal

Hony. Treasurer:—Dr. R. N. Misra.

Members:—

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Ex-Officio Members.

Chief Wild Life Warden, U.P., Lucknow.
 Wild Life Warden, Western Region, U.P.
 D.F.O., Dehra Dun.
 D.F.O., Saharanpur Division, Dehra Dun.

District Magistrate, Dehra Dun.
 Superintendent Police, Dehra Dun.

Sub-Committees.

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Wild Life Legislation (2) Publicity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (3) Education and Propaganda (4) Fishing. |
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Postal Address:

Astley Hall, Dehra Dun.

Wild Life Preservation Society of India

Vol. V. }

October, 1962

{ No. 1

Ourselves

From time to time we come across people, who, having borrowed (not bought) a copy of 'the Cheetal', generously remark that it is 'not a bad publication'. When we suggest, however, that they should join 'the Society', they ask 'why should we? What does it do? How does it preserve India's wild life?'

Let us imagine that this enquiry comes to us from three kinds of people: (a) a member of the general public, aged from 20 to 80, not necessarily either a naturalist or a sportsman, (b) a member of the forest service, (c) a young man still at school or college.

We shall answer them each in turn. (a) To the member of the general public: The great Victorian novelist, wit and statesman, Disraeli, when informed of the controversy then raging about Charles Darwin's theory of evolution replied 'Is man an ape, or an angel? I am on the side of the angels'. By joining our society you will have joined the angels—the section of society that is trying to save India's wild life. It is a subject on which it is impossible to be neutral. Either you are content to see India's wild life, possibly the most varied, the most beautiful, the most exciting in the world, blotted out by the relentless march of so-called civilization; or by wholesale, relentless, unfair extermination in the name of sport, or to make money,—or you are not. You cannot sit on the fence and maintain that it is no concern of yours; because you are a chartered accountant and it is not your business to look after wild life. By joining our society, even if it only yields you twice yearly a copy of our poor little 'Cheetal', you are making a stand for what is right and what is good. We are only an unofficial body; we have no 'pull' in matters of government—rather the reverse. But we represent the many thousands in India who are determined to save India's wild life. You are adding one more voice to the cry that is going up. Just as one extra straw may break the camel's back, so your membership may break down the last obstacle of official negligence and apathy. Your voice may even become articulate. You may have the courage to express your distaste for wrong ideas of sport, when discussed with approval, or at least consent, in public. You may condemn official connivance with the breaking of the game laws of India.

'But what', you may ask, 'has your society done so far?' We are an entirely unofficial body. We have no connection with the 'Indian Board of Wild Life'—an official advisory body. We include among our members many well known naturalists, sportsmen, and forest officers past and present. We must confess that we have done very little, but we have said a good deal. We have produced a 'complete revision of the game laws of India, based on the opinions of expert foresters and sportsmen, which has been unanimously given the 'cold shoulder' by official departments. We have utilised a small part of our always meagre funds in an experiment in fish conservation on the Jumna river. This has been partially successful and would have been still more successful with more official support from the district and police authorities. We publish 'the Cheetal' twice a year. This journal is only semi-scientific but it sets out to be a forum of unofficial views on wild life preservation, and contains a number of interesting articles on genuine sport, such as we wish to encourage, by authorities on the subject. By reading 'the Cheetal' you are kept up-to-date with the real 'wild life' situation.

(b) The member of the forest service: In your hands is placed, at the moment, the entire burden of the preservation of wild life in India. Your jurisdiction is, legally, confined to the reserved forests, but practically you are responsible for wild life preservation throughout the length and breadth of India, both in the reserved forests, in the recently acquired zamindari forests, and in the areas outside forests of any kind, in which the Black Buck and the Indian gazelle are rapidly marching towards extermination. You are hopelessly understaffed for the purpose, because the higher forest authorities give precedence to forest exploitation, and wild life preservation is a very minor sphere of your activities. In the old days, forest officers were generally intensely interested in the preservation of game, and wild-life profited thereby. Now-a-days this is not the case. Do you or do you not wish to see your forests destitute of wild life? If you do not, surely it is worthwhile keeping in touch with an unofficial organization like ours, in which expert opinions, however unofficial, find their voice. You have got to confess that the Forest Department has not been very successful so far in preserving India's wild life. The stories emanating from Dandakaranya where the Gaur and the Indian buffalo are being rapidly exterminated by illegal shooting, and from the U.P. Terai where the swamp deer is going the same way, should convince you of this. It is not your own fault individually, may be, but you have to assume the responsibility of your great service for the noble task of wild life preservation. You will hear yourself criticised undoubtedly in the pages of 'the Cheetal', but immunity from criticism is only the privilege of dictatorship, or a dictatorial bureaucracy. Suppose, for example, that in the next five years the Sal tree (*Shorea robusta*) becomes extinct, or even threatened with extinction, you can well imagine the disturbance that will be created in Forest circles. Somebody's tail will be

most thoroughly twisted. But today when the spotted deer is threatened with the same fate nobody minds very much. One should always listen to criticisms of oneself, even when one thinks the critics misinformed.

(c) To the young man at School or College: Here it is generally the case of the boy not realising how the wild life situation has changed in the last twenty years. He thinks that, because, in driving through the forest, he sees an occasional deer or wild pig that things were always so, and that nothing is wrong today: Or he may drive from Delhi over the plains towards Mathura or Jaipur and, seeing an occasional black buck, imagine that they were always a rather rare animal. We must inform him that twenty years ago you could not drive from Delhi to Mathura without seeing great herds of black buck, and that it was almost impossible to drive along the Dehra Dun forest roads without seeing not one or two cheetal, but large companies and whole sounders of wild pig.

One may also find that one's interrogant has had the hunting instinct awakened in him already, and that, to satisfy this perfectly natural urge, he has been taken out at night by his unenlightened parents or friends and invited to blaze away in the spotlights of a jeep at anything on four legs. He really thinks that this is 'sport' because 'everyone does it' and because he has never heard of the art of stalking a deer. We must refer him to the article in this issue by Mr. Askani Imam entitled 'The place of wild life in civilization'. He may persist in saying that night driving and shooting animals on the roads in the headlights is 'jolly good fun' and that chasing black buck over the plains in a car is 'tremendously exciting', and he may, therefore, describe them both as 'sport'. If so he doesn't know what sport is. Driving a car from Delhi to Agra at an average speed of 70 miles an hour may be 'exciting' but it is not the sport of motor racing any more than working up to Mussoorie by the bridle path is mountaineering. For an activity to be called sport it must demand skill and/or danger. Stalking a deer requires skill but involves no danger. Shooting a tiger, leopard or bear demands skill and involves danger, whether you sit in a machan or shoot from the ground, always provided that you realise that wounding the animal involves you in the sacred duty of following it yourself until you have killed it. Legitimate angling by bait fishing, spinning, or fly fishing demands skill. The only danger is, when using waders, that the water may come over the top of the waders, turn you upside down and drown you—which has happened. But it is certainly sport. Dynamiting or poisoning of fish and certain kinds of netting demands no skill and involves no danger. This is not sport. Mountaineering demands skill and involves obvious dangers of your own choosing. It also demands other qualities, such as endurance and appreciation of beauty. Walking up to Mussoorie is not mountaineering, though it may well lead to it; so I do not discourage it. Motor-racing is certainly sport, demanding supreme skill and involving great danger to yourself or your rivals. Driving from

Delhi to Agra at an average of 70 miles an hour demands skill and involves danger, but I do not call it sport, since the danger is not only to yourself—there are no rivals—but to innumerable pedestrians, cattle, sheep and other motorists. Shooting a tiger is sport if the danger is only to yourself. If you are safe and your beaters are in danger I should say it was not sport. Usually the beaters are not in any danger from a well run tiger beat, and in any case they accept this danger willingly, but if you insist on a beat of an angry or wounded tiger which is more than likely to turn on the beaters I should say you were no sportsman. If you shoot at a tiger from a car on a road, wound it and leave it to be a danger to all forest dwellers you are not only not a sportsman but a criminal.

There is another element about sport which is a little bit more difficult to define. If a certain football or cricket club were only to make fixtures against teams that it was certain of beating you would not describe it as a 'sporting' team. If you shoot a deer from a car, or even a tiger for that matter, it has no chance against you. If you stalk your deer, it has a very good chance. The slightest clumsy movement and the animal is away. Please note that I am *not* in favour of using a .22 rifle against a tiger, so as to give it a sporting chance, not because to do so is to endanger your own life—that is your own affair—but because the most minute error in placing your shot means a wounded tiger and danger to other people.

Fishing is a sport where skill is demanded at two stages; firstly in inducing the fish to take your bait, which, on some days, requires almost inhuman skill, and the fish has, as every fisherman knows, a very good chance of saying 'no' to all your allurements; secondly you need skill in playing and landing your fish, if it is of some size. The fish has a very reasonable chance of dislodging your hook or even of breaking your tackle. Now if, on a day when fish are taking freely, so that using fine tackle gives you no advantage in inducing the fish to take your lure, you fish with a line of 25 lbs. breaking strength, knowing that there are no fish in the water over five pounds, you are not fishing in a sporting way because your gallant opponent has no chance once it is hooked.

Even in mountaineering it has generally been accepted that you should 'give the mountain a chance'. At one time rubber soles instead of nailed climbing boots were considered unfair on the mountain. There was once a school of thought that was in favour of climbing Everest without oxygen, for the same reason, 'to give the mountain a chance'. This particular mountain has since proved that, even if its attackers use oxygen, it has still a weapon or two left in its armoury. We are ourselves a hopelessly back number as a mountaineer. But we must confess, that the modern technique of 'pitons', 'carabiners', 'etriers', etc., which enables modern climbers to climb more than perpendicular rock cliffs, festooned in a cocoon of safeguarding ropes seems to us perilously near to 'not giving the mountain a

chance'. But since several of them still lose their lives in doing so we cannot exactly say that they are unsporting.

If you are a keen sportsman you will surely want to find animals and birds to shoot and fish to catch ten years from now. Your attitude must not be "Everyone is killing things as fast as they can and in any way, sporting or unsporting; why shouldn't I do the same?" You are not justified in doing wrong because everyone else is doing so.

You will, therefore, join our society, ally yourself with 'the angels' and read 'the Cheetal', where you will find many accounts of adventures by real sportsmen, and much censure of unsporting ways of shooting and fishing. You will thus become a real sportsman yourself, and by standing up for the real ideal of sport, and refusing—this is most important—to join any unsporting adventure after game, you will help to save India's wild life. As Mr. Ashok Imam says, "if deer in India were only shot by stalking, there would be no problem of wild life preservation."

R.L. Holdsworth.

We have been ever critical of the forest Department where such an attitude was called for and now we learn that the Chief Conservator of Forests invited our Hon. Secretary Shri Gurkirat Singh Mann to see him and had a talk over a cup of tea with Mr. Mann, which resulted in the Chief Conservator referring the proposed U.P. Wild Life Protection Act of 1960 to our Society for our suggestions. We understand that with this Act Fish will become a state subject for protection, which will save the "Mighty-Mahaseer" from destruction. It was such co-operation we wanted from the Forest Department and we hope, for the future there will be better understanding.

Editorial Notes

It will not be out of place to offer in these pages our congratulations to one of the keenest of our members and a member of our executive committee, Hari Dang, on his unique performance on the 1962 Indian Everest Expedition. To begin with he carried a load of more than fifty pounds from Camp V (about 24,000 ft.) to the South Col of Everest, nearly 26,000 ft. without oxygen. This was not intended. By some mistake he had failed to check up on his oxygen being switched on. On top of this he was one of the support party who carried loads up to the final camp at 27,600 ft., and, one of the original final three climbers having fallen sick on the way, he was asked to join the summit party. After the first night at this altitude the next morning disclosed a violent storm raging over the mountain and no attempt on the summit was possible. After a second night at this camp without oxygen the next morning was fine and the climbers started for the top and were making good progress, when again they were struck by a violent storm. For some hours they struggled upward, though infinitely slowly. At 2.30 P.M. they had to admit defeat some way short of the South summit (28,750') and turned back, hoping to reach the South Col before dark. But the storm still raged in all its fury, the climbers became utterly exhausted, night fell and by sheer good luck they stumbled on their tent at 27,600 ft. where they spent a third night, again without oxygen. The next morning it took them four and a half hours to complete the 1,800 ft. journey down to the South Col. But Everest had not done with them. After a miserable enough night, they left their South Col tent in the morning but had only progressed a few hundred yards, when, on the slopes of the Geneva spur the party of five were set upon again by a violent storm. In the driven snow they lost touch with one another, and had not the storm ceased after half an hour as suddenly as it had begun they must all have lost their lives. Fortunately they joined up with one another and rejoined the rest of the party at Camp III.

Unfortunately Hari Dang had to pay heavily for his efforts. His feet were badly frost-bitten and it seems likely at the time of writing that he will have to have parts of both big toes amputated. But this will not, we are assured, prevent him in time from roaming the high mountains amid his friends the Barhel and the Tahr. We wish him a speedy and as complete a recovery as possible.

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Beating for Game birds and bag limits:

We have heard from a wild life official some such words as the following: "I don't mind how many jungle fowl you shoot, by the road side. What I want to stop are these 'battues', which mean wholesale slaughter." Now, when someone uses the word 'battue' instead of 'beat' he is speaking tendentiously. The word, somehow or other, conjures up visions of the French Revolution and the massacre of innocent aristocrats. What we wish to make clear is that 'beating' for jungle fowl, peafowl, partridge, chikor, does not involve wholesale slaughter, but is, on the contrary the most sporting way of shooting them, and does not always result in 'a big bag'.

When you take a shot-gun with you into the jungle you may have two motives: you may wish merely to shoot something to eat; in which case it doesn't really matter very much whether you shoot them sitting by the roadside, which is not very sporting, or whether you shoot them in flight. Or you may be a really keen bird shot; you wish to pit your skill against the speed and cunning of a jungle-fowl-in flight.

It is very probable that the man who creeps along the forest roads in a jeep in the early morning or late afternoon, shooting jungle fowl on the ground as they are feeding on the manure left by bullock-carts will, if he sticks to it conscientiously, kill more birds than he who takes his jeep to a certain point where he joins his beaters, and then enjoys a dozen or more beats in a whole day's shooting. These beats are far from being wholesale slaughter. Many, in fact, produce no birds at all, or, if they do, the birds escape without being shot at. Our own biggest bag in a whole day's jungle-fowl shooting has been 21. The most we have shot in a single beat is six birds. You can scarcely call this wholesale slaughter.

Moreover, with jungle fowl, and with partridges in very heavy bush, beating is the only way to get the birds into the air. If you try to 'walk them up' they will simply run on ahead of you, or, if they get up at all, they will be out of range.

As an alternative to this our wild life official encourages us to shoot in an altogether unsporting way at sitting birds on the roadside. We have mentioned our best day. It must not be imagined that all days are anything like as good. Very often you will conduct beat after beat, which do not produce a single bird. Very often you will beat all day and be rewarded by three birds, while your 'jeep crawler' in the early morning will have six birds in half an hour.

Bag limits: In the preliminary discussions before we produced our suggestions for the revision of the game laws, a representative of the Forest Department suggested that five jungle fowl per day was enough. Eventually we decided that 12 was a reasonable figure since

25 partridges had been conceded. In Dehra Dun we often spend a whole day in jungle-fowl shooting. This involves a motor drive costing at least 12 rupees in petrol. 8 beaters at Rs. 2 each mean 16 rupees. The shikari who organizes the beats gets Rs. 5. Total Rs. 33. It once happened to us that shooting alone, from the very first beat some 25 jungle fowl came out, of which we shot five. Had the maximum of five birds been in force, we should have had to stop shooting and paid out a sum of Rs. 33 for exactly five minutes shooting.

The Wild Life Department of the Indian Forests have since produced a most fantastic ordinance: a party which has drawn a block for big game shooting may shoot ten birds per gun in the whole fortnight for which the block is available. If the block-holder is alone this means, that he may shoot ten birds in 15 days. Ten birds may be very easily shot in two hours. So what ?

Before the last war shooting of jungle fowl was absolutely unrestricted, whether in big game shooting blocks or for small game license holders; and the supply of jungle fowl was ample. Where have they all gone ? Or are these stringent limitations about jungle fowl intended to disguise the fact that the Cheetal are disappearing through virtually unopposed poaching ?

As a matter of fact jungle fowl are not so scarce, except in zamindari forests which have been largely cut down by their owners and where crop-protection and the vast number of other licensed guns have taken a serious toll. Much of the reserved forests also now-a-days is heavily over-grazed and the typical jungle-fowl undergrowth has disappeared. The jungle-fowl, however, needs no protection by bag limits, though shooting without a permit both in and out of reserved forests should be stopped. And why is no similar protection given to the black partridge which used to be plentiful, but is now becoming really scarce in these parts ?

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The Corbett Memorial Prize

A life-member of our Society has written lamenting the fact that the Corbett Memorial Prize competition, advertised to be competed for before August 31st, 1960, has never been held.

We regret it equally, and we have examined the file on the subject carefully.

The blame is to be attributed mainly to ourselves. In the first place the circular issued to as many headquarters of Education in India as possible, and to all the Educational institutions in Dehra Dun and Mussoorie was impossibly vague:

(i) It was not stated whether the prize was to be competed for annually, or only once.

(ii) It was not stated how many prizes were to be awarded.

(iii) It was not stated what the value of the prize was to be, though there is a mutilated typescript declaring that 'the Society' would add Rs. 500 to the prize to the Rs. 500/- given by Miss Maggie Corbett.

(iv) The various projects were vague and unequal in the amount of work required. For instance two good 'Wild Life' photographs would apparently qualify for the prize, which might be a matter of an hour's work or even less; another project was 'the record of the behaviour of two species of animal or bird over a period of nine to twelve months', which, it follows, would take a whole year; and who is to decide whether the two 'Wild Life' photographs were the genuine work of the competitor?

We reproduce below the projects and the conditions of the competition as given out in the circular which is the only source of information available.

The project to be carried out may consist, *among other similar subjects* (the italics are ours) of one or more of the following:—

(1) Observation of two pairs of birds throughout their complete breeding season.

(2) Photographing wild life, at least two subjects.

(3) Measuring, recording, and taking plaster casts of footprints of two wild animals or birds.

(Who is to decide whether the products are the authentic work of the competitor?)—Ed.

(4) Observation of the behaviour and habits of at least two species of wild animals or birds over a period of nine to twelve months.

(5) Putting up nesting boxes, planting fruit trees, making dams for storage of water for animals or fish breeding etc.

(What is to prevent an ambitious competitor from presenting a purely imaginative account of his activities on these lines?)—Ed.

Any project submitted for the award of the prize should be the work of an individual student, or of a group of students not exceeding five (a further complication) and should be attested as such by the head of the institution. (How can he know?)

All entries should reach the undersigned by the 31st Aug. 1960. The prizes will be awarded in Oct. 1960.

Students or institutions requiring any further details may write to the undersigned. (Many did, but received no clarification other than a repetition of the circular.)

This is all that need be quoted, and it will be obvious that the terms of reference for the competition are impossibly vague.

The trouble was that, the baby having been born, none in the society was prepared to nurse it.

What is to be done?

Obviously the first thing is to publish in the 'Cheetal' the exact terms of the competition. What is the value of the prize or prizes offered? What is a student? Under 18 or 83? Is it an annual competition or is it only to be held once? Obviously some of the listed projects must be cut out, as being impossible for an outsider to judge.

We believe that the solution of the problem is to simplify it radically into the form of an essay open to the whole of India. Age limit 18 (to be certified by the head of the institution). Three prizes to be awarded. Judges to be three members of the Executive Committee.

I suggest some subjects: More may be added:

1. The history and the future of the tiger in India.
2. The connection between sport and wild life preservation.
3. Observations on the behaviour and habits of any one species of wild animal or bird, extending over one year.
4. Fishing in India, commercial and sporting.
5. The balance of nature.

Whether the competition should be an annual event or should only be held once depends, of course, on the wishes and the generosity of Miss Corbett. She must certainly be consulted. One member of the Executive Committee should make himself responsible for the organization of the competition. The competition in its present form, based on the circular quoted from is far too vague. We cannot expect our student members, let alone boys and girls outside our Society, to enter their names for it in its present form.

Miscellaneous Notes

Game Preservation in North Bengal

A correspondent writes: Since the leases of forests held by the three game associations of North Bengal were terminated by the Government of Bengal in 1958, those bodies have been practically in cold storage. Membership has naturally fallen off and poaching has been rampant. The Game Federation of Bengal, which ties these three associations together, approached the Government with certain proposals by which they would have adequate representation on the State Wild Life Committee (which for some reasons has replaced the State Wild Life Board) and which would ensure three types of membership and, therefore, three types of permits—shooting and fishing, fishing, and viewing forests. It offered its accumulated funds for the purpose of extending the Nature Education Scheme, now confined to Darjeeling district only, to all the schools of North Bengal. Patrolling in reserved forests by the Game Associations, increase of powers of Honorary Forest Officers to deal with offences against wild life, extermination of vermin in sanctuaries, exclusion of fires in forests, control of crop-protection guns, buffer zones between forests and cultivation including fencing between forests and tea gardens, control of dynamiting of streams etc. were covered by the proposals. The need for a permanent Game Warden of the status of a Conservator of Forests was stressed and the increase of fees for sporting arms licences, the same to be set aside exclusively for wild life protection, was urged.

Although nothing more has been heard since the above suggestions were made, the fact that Bengal has such a good foundation in the shape of three longstanding game associations and a federation, apart from the old Darjeeling (now Bengal) Natural History Society and that these bodies have not given up the fight, augurs well for the future of wild life in that part of India. In that respect there is only one other part of the country as well organised and that is the Nilgiris in South India though the neighbouring areas, such as the Palni hills and Peermade, have their associations. Recent recruits are the two similar associations of Assam, one on the north bank and the other in upper Assam. Northern India and the U.P. in particular, are lucky in having the Wild Life Preservation Society of India with its headquarters at Dehra Dun and although it is an organisation of a somewhat different type, the Bombay Natural History Society serves the western part of India as a 'watchdog for wild life.'

Government should welcome the existence of these various organisations and encourage them in their efforts to protect wild life. Times and circumstances may change but the value

of such bodies in working for wild life, whether in reminding the administration of the needs of the hour and of its duties or in educating public opinion, both legitimate functions in any democracy worthy of the name, cannot be disputed.

What is really needed is an amalgamation of all the bodies working for wild life in India into a strong federation, the united voice of which will then be powerful enough to influence the authorities in their handling of the problems associated with wild life preservation. In 'unity is strength' and the wild life bodies of India would be well advised to unite in the cause for which they are working.

[*Editorial Comment:* As in the U.P so in North Bengal, a very great deal of good will towards wild life preservation seems to have been wasted. The three Game Associations of North Bengal, who were doing a very good job for wild life preservation, having had their leases terminated by Government, appear to have made certain very generous gestures to Government which have been cold-shouldered. In the U.P our original Wild Life Preservation Society of Northern India, now the Wild Life Preservation Society of India, though it had no financial or other assets to put at the disposal of Government, as had the North Bengal Associations, has been treated by the U.P. Forest Department as if we are just a damned nuisance. Only in the Nilgiris, it seems is there fruitful co-operation between a private wild life organization and the Forest Department.

It cannot really be claimed that the Indian Forest Department has made a great success of Wild life Preservations so far. Poaching is rampant, whether by poor villagers, or high officials of the VIP class; bombing and poisoning of streams and rivers by military personnel and P.W.D. workers and villagers goes on unchecked; law-abiding sportsmen are harrassed; sanctuaries are being created which are not worth the paper on which their charters are written. It is surely time that the Forest Department, with a great prestige to preserve, cooperated with the thousands of wild life lovers, whether they are sportsmen or photographers, in the supreme task of saving India's wild life.]

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Unusual Behaviour of a Leopard.

(*Extract from a letter from Mount Abu.*)

We had a panther in our compound last week, and it gave us a most exciting morning. There was something wrong with it—either bitten by a snake or in a coma for some other reason. One of our servants came face to face with it early in the morning and raised the alarm. It took cover in a bush near our gate, then walked boldly up our drive to the front

of the house, crossed our lawn and then jumped down into some bushes in front of our garden. I was too late with my movie camera but John, covered by the orderly with a gun, followed and got what I hope will be some nice shots, including one face to face at about fifteen yards.

By that time a huge crowd had collected and some people started to stone it and I had to organise a bundabost to protect them from danger. The leopard showed no signs of fight and seemed to have no interest in us, as some people chased it from cover to cover. I tried to organise a drive towards the jungle close by, but all our efforts to get it back to the jungle failed. It seemed to have lost all sense of self-preservation and was lethargic and indifferent. It just seemed to want a place to lie up in cover, either to die or recover.

We finally decided to destroy it. We drove down to a spot near Nakki lake and found it dozing under a bush, head on a stone and a large crowd keeping its distance but getting a grand-stand view. It would not budge for the hour we were there. I manoeuvred the car for a neck shot and finished it at fifteen yards. It was sheer murder and I felt rotten.

The animal was found to be blind in the left eye with signs of suppuration. Some think it was snake bite, others, that a piece of porcupine quill in the eye had worked its way into the brain. It was a big animal, healthy and beautifully marked, altogether it was an exciting but unpleasant business.

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Oilmen To Preserve Natural Resources

(Extract from "BATORI" the House Magazine of the A.O.C., Digboi, Assam)

Calls for extended cooperation among conservation organizations and a stepped-up programme of education on wildlife and other natural resources were voiced recently by the American Petroleum Institute.

In a paper spelling out the Institute's policy on conservation, the oil industry trade association endorsed programmes of education by its members designed to further public appreciation of wildlife and other natural resources and to promote good conservation practices by all individuals.

The Institute said it advocates full cooperation among industry, government and private conservation organizations. It favours cooperative conferences among these groups on national, regional and local levels "to promote mutual understanding of respective problems and purposes and to promote conservation objectives."

Compatibility of oil and gas exploration and development within areas primarily designated for recreation and wildlife conservation has been effectively demonstrated by the petroleum industry, the Institute pointed out. An outstanding example is the development of oil in Alaska within the limits of the Kenai National Moose Range, it said.

"Great care is taken in this Alaska development to assure a minimum disturbance of the natural habitat. Where seismic lines have been cut, all debris has been removed and check dams built to prevent possible erosion from vehical tracks. Stream crossings meet rigid requirements to prevent any impediment or change in the normal water now," the Institute said.

"It is also pertinent to note that the petroleum industry operates without harm to wildlife in refuges and in river delta and marsh areas of the Gulf Coast States which are highly important habitats for waterfowl and aquatic animals," it was noted.

It Happened In India

"Never fire at a Bison from a Jeep at night even if you have him right in front of the vehicle, immobilised in the glare of a searchlight," I was advised by an 'experienced' sportsman of Bastar-Orissa during a recent shoot there. I had almost decided he was a man worth cultivating; a man who knew his rules and his sport, when he added sagely, "Make sure to turn the jeep around and fire a volley over your shoulder before accelerating away full-throttle."

"Bison," he added in clarification, "are dangerous. If they are facing the sound of gunfire, they may charge and it will be hard to reverse the jeep".

Need I add he has shot four Bison, all with his shotgun. How many have drawn out their agony to die with unformed curses for us humans in their grand hearts even I dare not conjecture.

* * * *

"Glad to know you have come to shoot Bison," welcomed a Senior PWD Engineer on a Hydel project in Andhra Pradesh this winter. "I have shot many. I shot one last month."

Humbled and eager, I asked "May I see it." He obliged by bringing it from his cellar. "But that is the skull and horns of a cow bison," came my horrified expostulation, regretted almost immediately, for I fully expected my host to be shattered, and annoyed at this reminder of his sins. I need not have worried !

"Yes, yes," he beamed heartily, sickeningly, "it was a cow with two young calves who were teasing her udders. She was quite still in the light and dropped with one shot from my .375."

(Editorial comment: These two stories would be amusing if they were not so tragic. Are there no forest officers in these parts who have the 'guts' to stop and punish this illegal slaughter ?)

* * * * *

I approached a Police Sub-Inspector at his 'hut' in Orissa to enquire about a man-eater I was supposed to be hunting for. It had killed and eaten some sixty men, and news had come from the S.I.'s 'thana' of a 'recent' kill !

He was dressed in rags and tatters and smoked a vile cheroot with the lighted end inside his wizened mouth. "No, no, no, there never be murder or killing in my 'thana' this year," he declared vehemently. "No man-eater ever coming here I am swearing," said he.

"But the District Magistrate sahib told me an old Gond woman had been killed by man-eaters here in this very 'basti' in your 'thana'".

He repeated his violent denials. I insisted on my information. I said a tiger had killed a woman only last week.

"Ah, oh, oh, oh," rejoined this paragon of negation. "Tiger-bite case very plenty here. Tiger-bite very common. No, man-eaters."

With proper information and assistance it would be easy to wipe out man-eaters who tarnish the man of their breed and lead to laxity in the enforcement of reservation rules where the tiger is concerned. Right now the situation in the U.P. and Orissa is such that not only are half the tigers in the latter forest-state occasional man-eaters and a greater percentage become so each year through road-side 'shikaris', but it takes as much as a week for a sportsman to be informed of human kills. Like as not he gets no assistance when he volunteers his help in exterminating the pest.

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A schoolmaster who is a keen member of our Society wished to pay a four day visit to the Corbett National Park with five boys from his school, in the hope of seeing something of this great National Institution. He had gathered from the Uttar Pradesh booklet on hunting and fishing that the proper person to approach was the Chief Wild Life Warden, U.P., Lucknow.

Rather more than three weeks from the day he proposed to start, he addressed a registered letter to the Chief Wild Life Warden, announcing his intention of visiting the National Park and asking for permission to fish and for accommodation in one of the Forest Rest Houses. He waited patiently for twelve days, but, receiving no reply, then sent a rather long pre-paid telegram repeating his request. There was no reply. Three days later he sent another wire equally long, but, since the wild life department's inefficiency or discourtesy had cost him a pretty penny already, not prepaid. After a 48 hour wait—we cannot say whether due to the post office or the Forest Department—a wire arrived saying that he should apply to the D.F.O., Kalagarh Forest Division, Lansdowne! This was discouraging, but still he did not despair. He sent another very long telegram (prepaid) to the D.F.O. Kalagarh, narrating the course of events and begging for an immediate reply. He had waited 48 hours for this when he told us this story.

(Editorial comment:—We do not know how they spend their time in the Lucknow Wild Life Office. Possibly the clerks are keen bridge-players, and do not bother about registered letters or pre-paid telegrams. Our advice to this unfortunate victim of bureaucratic inefficiency is to go to Lucknow himself, if he has any serious application to make, or better still, to entrust his application to Some Very Important Person Indeed.

But one would have thought that the Forest authorities, with this magnificent Park to boost, would have been a little more efficient and a little more courteous. There is a lot of talk about interesting the Youth of India in Wild Life, but, when such is the response, one can only think that the Forest don't really care a 'cuss' about wild life.

In case it may be argued that our complainant's arguments are unsubstantiated we should say that we are in possession of the relevant counterfoils of the registered letter and three telegrams.)—Ed.

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(Extracts from Letters)

"On yet another occasion, a few months ago, when I went to NEFA I saw most of the men from the local garrison returning from the river each carrying a decent sized fish. On

inquiry I was told that the Gurkhas are adept at swimming and catching the fish by hand! Inspection of the water from closer quarters revealed a horrible sight. There were dozens of fish—big, small and mostly tiddlers—floating dead on the surface. I wonder whether something can be done to stop such slaughter? ”

[*Editorial note*:—But we are assured by many senior Gurkha officers that Gurkha soldiers today never bomb fish!]

II

“I am in the process of making a brief survey of wild life in the North Cachar Hills (mainly ornithological) and am horrified by the extent of uncontrolled (jooming*) of virgin jungle and further destruction of valuable forest by fires spreading from these jooms during February and March every year.

The North Cachar hills are ornithologically the most valuable tract of country in Assam and unless radical steps are taken to preserve from destruction a large area of forest there the fauna will disappear.

A large wild life sanctuary is indicated and immediate steps should be taken on the matter.”

How They Do It Elsewhere—

The 1961 deer season in Wisconsin and Michigan in the U.S.A. saw nearly 600,000 hunters poised for eight days of shooting in the last part of November. The Upper Peninsular sector south of Lake Superior had enough of deer (in places thirty per square mile) to provide one shootable buck, with antlers at least three inches long, to every three hunters.

The neighbouring small town of Hurley, Wisconsin, has a brief splurge of hectic activity for celebrations of successful hunters. Fifty six bars cater for them, dispensing drink and girls to satisfy a mad, spending spree. In the first four days of the season four hunters died of gunshot wounds, six from heart attack. !

(*Editorial Note*:—While we deplore the loss of human life, and the waste of good liquor, this rather frivolous extract provides a moral: Wisconsin and Michigan, a thickly populated part of the U.S.A., were nevertheless able to produce by successful conservation, no less than thirty shootable deer per square mile.

When we can say that of any part of India we shall have done something.)

[*‘Jooming’, a word familiar to all who have lived in the Eastern parts of India, means the burning of sections of forest, mainly by tribals, who grow a crop of grain or vegetables on the rich ashes, and decamp, to repeat the performance elsewhere. It is one of the perennial headaches of the Forest Department, who are never empowered to put a stop to it by government because it would offend the ‘tribals’, who occur to have valuable votes!—Editor.]

Our Less Known Species—The Serow.

By Hari Dang

This ungainly and rare goat-antelope is unique amongst our fauna in many ways. It is certainly the most pugnacious, being possibly the only smaller herbivorous animal that has been known to lead indirectly to the death of human beings.

Large as a mule, with serrated, ringed horns which sweep backwards to a length of upto fifteen inches, the Serow offers excellent, if tricky, sport. Two slightly different forms of the Serow are known, extending from the Central Himalayas through Nepal to Assam and the hills eastwards into Burma.

In Kumaon and Garhwal, where I have done most of my chasing after Serow, They dwell in devoted pairs, frequenting steep grassy hillsides from five to ten thousand feet high, with dense cover of Oak or Rhododendron close by. Less fond of cliffs than the Ghooral, far less versed in mountaineering technique than the Tahr, the Serow is yet a mountaineer of much merit. Its unwieldy build and shaggy coat give it an appearance of clumsiness which is belied by the accurate and often fantastic leaps it has been known to make from one crag to another.

In Assam, camping after a Bull Bison in the Mikir and North Cachar hills in the Fifties, I was told of a pair of Serow that haunted a grassy sward above a sheer cliff in the mornings and evenings. The Bison being far and the blood trail dry, I went out and stalked the hillside to spot the pair, the male, to judge from the larger head and horns, somewhat nearer the edge of the cliff below. The edge was overgrown with bushes, and under cover of these and the thicker forest where the camp lay, my shikari and I approached the animal, hoping to cut off the retreat down the cliff, which was said to be negotiable by the Serow. A gust of wind gave us away when some two hundred yards away, for, to shoot at long range with the heavy rifle I was carrying would have been futile. The animal perked up its ears, sneezed and while we watched astonished, sailed in a graceful leap over the edge of the cliff without a moment's hesitation. Rushing to the edge, we saw him scramble to his feet and carry a glissading run down scree. The height of the cliff, we later found to have been over fifty feet. The female took cover in the forest on the far side.

On one recorded occasion, a female Serow has been known to have attacked and tossed over a cliff to a gruesome death a local shikari, who, having bagged the male of the pair,

was busy gloating over the dead animal. More first hand accounts of such pugnacity are not lacking, and once, in the forests above Mansiari, I have myself witnessed a determined Serow's bold efforts to shoo off my shikari by making feints at him, with much scraping of hooves and sneezing.

The Serow remains an animal more talked about than seen, except by the local shikaris of their difficult hilly terrain, where they frequently fall prey to the fatal combination, like all mountain game, of deep snow and ignorant, unscrupulous and bloodthirsty shikaris. Unless more facts about the Serow's breeding habits, natural enemies and present numbers in India are known, and the species given adequate protection, a matter connected with the very basic issues of politics and administration, we will be the poorer for having lost yet another of our interesting sporting animals.

Angling in the Himalayas

The mighty Himalayan Ranges stretching from Nagaland to Kashmir across the breadth of India afford some of the finest Angling opportunities for sportsmen. From the gigantic heights of these mountains roll down streams, destined by Nature to soon become big rivers, coursing down to the sea to replenish the unending liquid of the ocean, as was surely meant by the Great Planner of the universe.

These streams, though a mere tricle at their source, soon become rivers being continuously replenished by side streams joining them, and their silvery waters dancing under the rays of the rising sun, contain India's finest sporting fish like the Mahseer, Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Indian Trout, Snow Trout, etc. As they flow to lower altitudes many other types of fish are found which grow from a few pounds in weight to 250 lbs. in the case of the Goonch, though the latter is not relished either for sport or for the table.

The upper streams contain the fingerlings, to grow unhampered by the fierce rivers and the denizens inhabiting them lower down who would make short work of baby-fish and eat them up without giving them a chance to grow. These fingerlings soon grow to a size when they can look after themselves and come down with the ending monsoon rains, when the bigger ones too who had gone to lay their spawn with the early showers, also return after

breeding, in these small peaceful streams which may be compared to a cradle for their young to play and grow, to get ready for the greater purpose ahead, ordained by Nature as their lot to become fish of the big rivers.

The sportsman or the Tourist visiting the lower Himalayas is usually interested in having a care-free holiday amid green surroundings, rippling water shining under the clear sun, where in the depths near the boulders lie the most beautiful gold, silver, and purple-marked Mahseer, a tiger among the fish, hence his name 'MAHISHER', waiting for his prey. This is the chance for the visitors to pit his skill against his quarry, and this once again awakens the inherited impulse of primitive man to get his prey from the wild state, with skill and hard work into the pot, as perchance millions of years ago in the cave dwelling age the ancestors of this great angler had done before him with cruder weapons than the modern spinning reel, nylon lines, and glass rods built by experts to the precision of a Swiss watch. The bait too now is of metal, plastic or rubber, which looks so close to the real insect, or small fish or frog, that without fail the great Mahseer lying in wait for his prey is deceived and grabs it before it can get away, which impression is created by the pulling action through the waters by the angler when he reels in after a cast.

Among the growing population of India too, the youth is realising that they must share in the sporting pleasures their motherland affords, so much so that children of school age wish to acquire tackle to go to the rivers for play, recreation and sport made possible by modern methods of angling. More and more people are taking to this sport, but alas, the sporting fish population is not keeping pace with the growing demand of better educated young sportsmen, wishing to get what they claim to be their birthright. Commercial exploitation takes its toll when ignorant villagers use small mesh nets to secure the maximum weight of flesh even by adding bags of fingerlings now an ounce in weight but destined, if protected, to reach a hundred pounds or over.

This is not the end or beginning of destruction: poisoning of small streams in the higher ranges of the Himalayas is extensively prevalent, where a weed is burnt and thrown into the breeding waters killing all fish big and small, and at the same time rendering the fertile ova into unfertile and rotting spawn. In the bigger streams, dynamite and special types of bombs costing only 75 nP. sold freely in villages, are used to blow up pools, killing all small and big fish, most of which are carried away by the swirling waters to be eaten up by other predators, or disintegrate after death. The explosives also exhaust the oxygen of the waters killing whatever is left through suffocation. When the rains subside barricades of thorns are erected in the streams to prevent fish from returning to rivers which are then picked up dead or dying, or killed with stones and sticks.

At night big thick lines with formidable hooks are laid in the streams, each hook contains as bait a live fish almost half a pound in weight, which dies and also accounts for another big fish hooked at night and pulled out in the morning. Some of these night lines are placed only 5 feet from each other, showing the number and extent of damage caused by them.

Another method which has recently come into vogue, in the foot-hill pools, is based on the Arrah method of Bengal, when large hooks bunched together are tied to large floating bamboos which are dragged through the water wounding most of the fish, and hooking some which are hauled dangling to these hooks.

Unless Government takes a serious view of all these practises and gears the Civil and Police authorities to punish such crimes against Nature, provides well guarded reserved waters for sport with Rod and Line, and protects spawning grounds, the sport of angling, leave alone the demand of the growing population of young sportsmen and Tourists will become impossible to meet, there will be complete extermination of the species, not in the distant future.

* * * *

Taking for granted that complete destruction will be stopped and there will be sporting fish left for anglers, the evolution of the modern tackle from what was used by our grand-fathers in the past can be discussed.

The rod in those days was called an Angle, and was fifteen feet in length, heavy and unwieldy except with the proverbial strength of the ancients. The line was thick and visible to the fish in the water; but, as the population of fish was much more than it is now, they managed to catch them. The reel was a big round wheel with the thick line rolled over it and was called the 'winch'; else how could they call such a big pulley a reel? But all over the world research went on till the casting reel with the level wind attachment, and the five foot light rod was discovered. This is now being rapidly replaced with the 'thread-line fixed spool' reel, a little longer glass rod than the casting rod, and nylon lines varying in strength according to the job in hand. The fixed spool reel obviates the annoyance of over-running, so prevalent in casting reels. In America they call the thread-line tackle "Spinning Tackle", which is now being used for heavier work than the thread-line was intended to do. There are also covered spool automatic reels, so easy for the beginner.

Fly fishing tackle is also giving place to spinning tackle, and flies are more efficiently cast with the light lines, on the system advocated by "Wanless" with light spinning tackle.

BAITS.

One can easily dispense with live or dead bait now, because the artificial baits, plugs, spinners, worms of plastic, flies, spoons, too numerous to detail are as efficient as the real thing in deceiving the quarry and can be relied on with the greatest of confidence, saving the angler from the messy business of handling natural bait with his hands. Besides, the former do not easily part from the line, unless the fish breaks them away, or they are broken by getting snagged in the bottom of deep rivers from where they cannot be released.

With the above-mentioned equipment in hand imagine the angler, who has worked hard at his desk, planning a holiday to the hills, where all worries will be forgotten, where a hard day's exercise will tire him enough to earn a well deserved rest, near the roaring abyss of cold spray of waters from the snows, with smoke rising in front of his tent emitting a pleasant odour of fresh fish cooked for dinner; where the shadows fall, giving place to pleasant reflections of the day's happenings. Even the big fish which got away breaking the line has a memory to cherish.

In the morning next day the angler experiences a feeling of vigour generated by the exercise, freedom from business worries, and a night's rest in the bracing climate. As the eyes open the roar of waterfalls and rapids are again heard; as if the river had ceased to flow when oblivion brought on by sleep prevailed.

Gurkirat Singh Mann.

[*Editorial Notes:* *1. We had always been told, hitherto, that the derivation of the mahseer's name was Mahasir=big head, but we willingly accept Mr. Mann's derivation—'tiger-fish' as more likely and more appropriate, Persian Mahi Fish Sher Tiger.

*2. As a 'die-hard' fly-fisherman—see Volume 4 No.1 of 'Cheetal'—we still venture to doubt whether the fly can be cast with the spinning rod with as great accuracy, or with less disturbance of the water in the immediate vicinity of the fish than it can by the fly-rod and fly reel, even though one is using the latest devices of Mr. Wanless of which I have read. Suppose you are fishing for a particular trout in a particular place, and that it is desirable to cast a fly exactly six inches up stream of his nose, and that since none can guarantee to be absolutely accurate with every cast, your first attempt is, shall we say, a foot off the proper line, you can, with a fly rod or reel, whip the fly off the water and repeat the cast within a second. With the daintiest spinning outfit in the world you will have to retrieve your line right up to the rod point before you can cast again. This will take you at least half a minute and in that time your trout may have moved a considerable distance and may be rising in a different place. The fly-fisherman of the Test and the Itchen, who are probably the most skillful

in the world, and who to maintain this reputation, have to keep up to date with the most modern tendencies in fly-fishing, have stuck to the orthodox fly-rod of seven to ten feet, the orthodox fly reel, as simple as it is efficient, the relatively heavy casting line of dressed silk, and the three yard cast of tapered gut or nylon. They would have a heart attack if they saw Mr. Mann approaching their jealously guarded waters armed even with the latest and most delicate of spinning rods.]

The Place of Wild Life in Civilization

With space travel an accomplished fact, and a landing on the Moon around the corner, it should be now technically possible to land helicopters on, say, Mount Everest, and even erect a pressurised, air-conditioned tourist lodge on its summit. But it would be a sad day when and if such a defilement of the mountain took place. It would be a sad day too if defilement of the mountain was guarded against by a ban on climbing it.

Mount Everest may in its grandeur please the eye and so have a sensuous appeal. But its appeal to thinking man must go deeper, an appeal to the spirit evoked by the *challenge* which *climbing* it must represent. Thus making its summit a mere tourist resort would be in a sense degrading, even though this could hardly affect the material beauty of the mountain. On the other hand, the banning of attempts at climbing it would take away its appeal to the spirit as a testing place for much that is finest in man, the taking on of physical effort and danger for the very sake of these things and not for a mere material reward.

And so it is with wild life. If wild life came to be *everywhere* just another tourist attraction, to be gaped at in sanctuaries covering all our forests, with all hunting banned, it would be a sad day indeed. True, wild life can offer a sensuous pleasure to the eye, but its appeal must go deeper in thinking, searching man. For wild life affords us sport. Sport is not just a way of passing the time, but rather the undertaking of activity which involves skill, and/or exertion and/or danger, activity indulged in, in the ultimate analysis, for the very sake of these things. And thus, because material reward is not foremost as a reason for such activity, sport brings out some of the finer spiritual qualities in man. If neither skill nor exertion nor danger be present in any activity, then it cannot be sport. Thus it is possible to indulge in the sport of fly-fishing for trout weighing ounces rather than pounds,

yet to shoot a thousand tigers in an unsportsmanlike manner and be guilty of just butchery. The hunting of wild life, be it with rifle, gun, rod, spear or camera, can be sport in the truer sense of the word, and it can also be a mockery of this. It all depends on *how* one hunts, not *what* or how successfully one hunts. And if in the sport of mountain climbing a spiritual heritage can be found, then this must also be true of all activity which comes under the head of wild sports. The *sporting* hunting of game is another path of trial and tribulation and danger which thinking man may follow in search of some of the finest qualities in himself. So we see that wild life has a place in civilization which is apart from the solid, material aspect of just wild animals. The place of wild life in civilization, amongst thinking men, can hardly be flesh for butchery or living things which must be preserved just because they are beautiful, living things. Wild life has indeed a deeper function in the man-made scheme of things, just as has Mount Everest, notwithstanding the mere undeniable beauty of these two so dissimilar items from the gross physical standpoint.

I accept the need for some sanctuaries for wild life. But we should realise that the mere preservation of wild life has as little meaning as keeping Mount Everest inviolate by prohibiting all attempts at climbing it. Through the realm of sport wild life has a place in the scheme of civilised life. We should realise this and get those who hunt to see it. We should also get those *who do not hunt* to see it. I seriously question whether sanctuaries ought to be thrown open to tourists as they are at present. The purpose of a wild life sanctuary is just to be a sanctuary and not to provide a show for curious, gaping tourists. It is well known that wild life in sanctuaries becomes ridiculously tame. Has any one not noticed the tame behaviour of the whistling teal, wild birds free to flight as they will, in the Alipore Zoo? Anyone can visit any of our better game sanctuaries and with the minimum of effort see all the game he wants to, except possibly for some of our carnivora such as tiger and leopard. I have seen excellent photographs of rhinos taken in the Kaziranga Sanctuary, taken by a newspaperman who admitted that this was his *very first excursion into the wilds*. Yet the photographing was child's play off elephant back. Such activity may be worthy or harmless, depending upon one's viewpoint, but it can have nothing to do with sport, which I maintain is the primary reason for wild life in civilization. I go so far as to say that the ridiculous ease with which wild life may be viewed generally in our sanctuaries is far from harmless. Those who know nothing of the wild sports may, through the ease with which wild life may be viewed in our sanctuaries, *fail ever to achieve an understanding of our wild sports*. Could deer in a deer park help one to understand the noble art of deer-stalking? Could not deer in a deer park actually militate against the uninitiated understanding, or trying to understand, how the killing of deer by stalking is sport in the best sense of the word? If wild life has a nobler place in our lives than offering mere sensuous pleasure to the eye or palate, alive or

dead, if wild life plays a vital part in our wild sports which I maintain are more a spiritual heritage than a material one, then surely wild life ought not to be made into a cheapening display for mere tourists, just as I would say "God forbid!" to Mount Everest having a tourist resort on its summit.

Those who would fain be lovers of wild life ought to have an interest tinged with the desire to achieve for the sake of achievement, which after all is one way of defining sport. This desire to achieve in connection with things wild may be realised by mere bird-watching under the right circumstances, but scarcely by viewing elephants from a launch at Periyar, rhinos from elephant-back at Kaziranga, or lions from off a jeep at Gir.

My plea is, DO NOT MAKE OUT OF OUR SANCTUARIES JUST SO MANY OPEN AIR ZOOS. The so doing may effect the actual harm of preventing many from seeing the place of wild life in the world of sport, of sport being a vital activity in civilization, and of wild sports being amongst the finest forms of sport. Our sanctuaries should be first that and not thrown open to the curious public in the manner that they are. Needless to say, if wild life plays an important part in serving sport, then wild life preservation is essential. Plenty through preservation must be the motto, not just plenty of wild life, but plenty of wild life for the *sporting* hunting of the same be it with rifle, gun, rod, spear or camera. As I pointed out in an earlier issue of "The Cheetal", the sportsman is essentially a game-conservationist at heart, and that if all those who hunted did so with sport first and last in their minds, then game conservation would hardly be a problem. For example, if deer were only hunted by stalking, and if only warrantable stags were shot, would it matter, so far as the deer population was concerned, if there was not a single sanctuary?

Askari Imam.

Memories of Jim Corbett and the Mohan Man-Eater

The months of May and June although not the ideal time to visit the Kosi and Ramganga rivers was for me and my party the most convenient from the point of view of our school holidays.

Preparation for this trip took approximately two months, as permits for fishing and rest houses had to be got, allowing for postal delays, non-delivery of letters and inefficiency of certain officers, we eventually received passes only for the Kosi and Ramganga rivers, whereas up to date no reply on return of postal orders *after reminders*, have been received from the D.F.O., Haldwani to fish the Naundar-Sarju and Sarda rivers and to occupy the rest house of Chorgallia. We were offered a choice of two bungalows—one at Mohan and one at Kamaria.

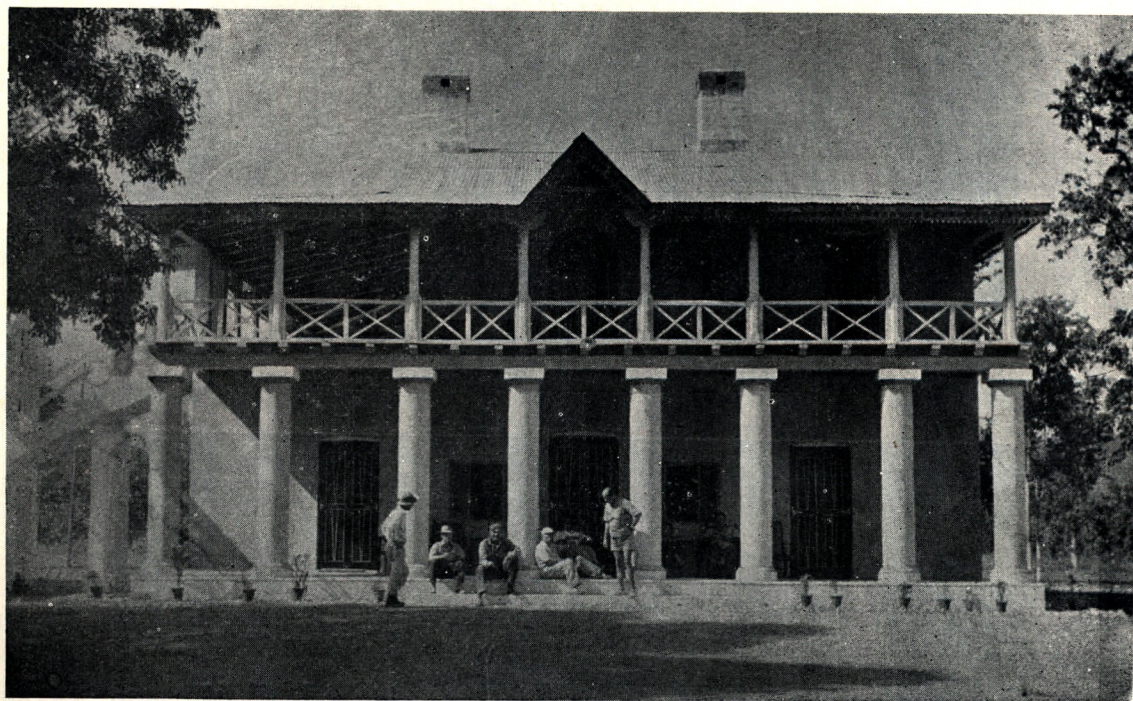
We accepted the latter 13 miles from Ramnagar on the Ranikhet road as it was an ideal situation, had flush and water but was not electrified, Mohan was too hot and had neither water nor flush.

I am indebted and grateful to the well-known fisherman of that area, Dr. R. Mondino for his valuable advice and the help he gave me before proceeding on this trip.

Kumaria is a delightful P.W.D. bungalow, overlooking the Kosi river. Two miles above Kumaria are some good deep pools which a few of our party visited and saw Mahseer of approx. 40 lbs. and one was clearly seen swimming about with a large plug dangling from its mouth.

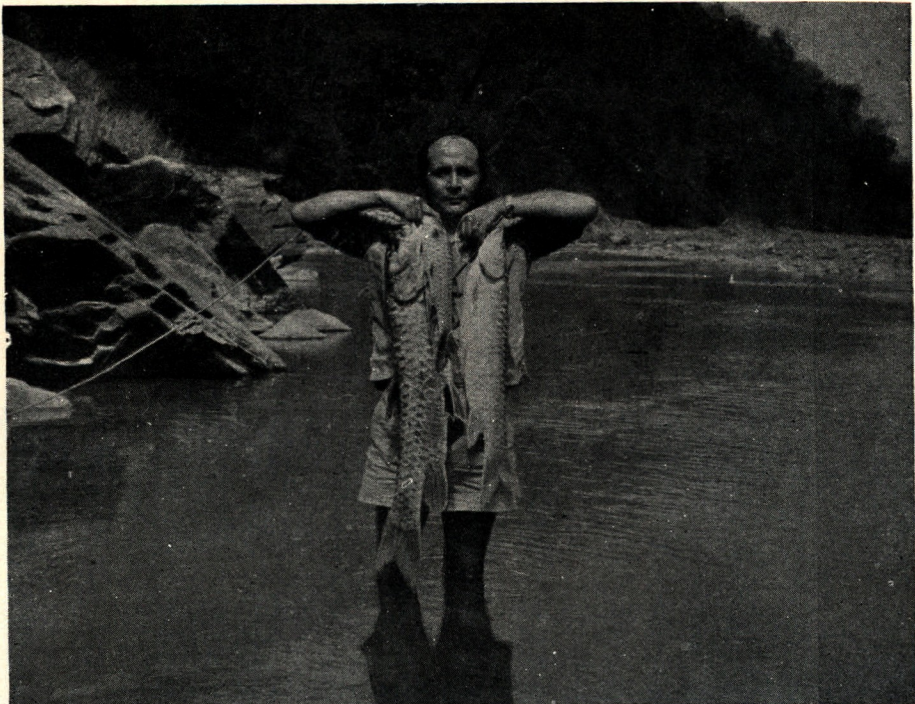
Below the bungalow is a deep pool where 30 lb. Mahseer could be seen cruising about. This is named by the locals the Lala Devi Dutt Pool. It was from this deep pool that Capt. MacGready (IN) one of our party caught the largest Mahseer of the trip, a 28 lb. fish. This news soon got to the ears of the head of the village on the opposite bank of Kumaria, and the following morning the whole village turned out in force with their one inch x 50 feet drag nets and decimated the pool—30 lb. Mahseer and 6 lb. Kala-Banse were being trapped and then battered to death with huge river boulders.

That great and noble man Jim Corbett, who loved the people of Garhwal, its jungles and rivers, would have shuddered had such destruction been permitted during his life which was spent amongst these wonderful people and surroundings, and who now have no dreadful man-eaters to contend with, but have themselves become the menace of those forests with their wanton destruction of our fish and fauna.



The Tourist Bungalow at Dikala, Corbett National Park.

—Photo by Mrs. Mainwaring.



Col. P. N. Rana with a morning's catch on the Ramganga.
Not only an expert at rogue elephants!

—Photo by Maj. Mainwaring.



Capt. MacGready with his 28 lb. Mahseer caught at Kumaria.

I took a photo of them and their leader which seemed to upset his sense of humour, for the next morning he sent my wife a warning not to trespass in *his* river.

We had six permits to fish the Kosi river from the D.F.O., Ramnagar which allowed us to fish upto Kumaria, and we did not realize that to fish in Government Forest area which requires a pass from the D.F.O., Ramnagar to *shoot also* requires a special permit from the Panchayat to *fish* in waters running through forest area on both left and right banks.

These villagers were out each night with torches and nets poaching the Kosi's full length from Gurjia to 2 miles above Kumaria. Not one used a rod or reel and the fishing guards stated that they were powerless as the Panchayats were permitted to do as they liked and rules did not apply to them as it did to pass holders.

After this unpleasant incident we decided to keep away from the Kosi river and, taking hints from that grand old man 'Skene-du' we visited one of the hunting grounds of Jim Corbett where the Mohan man-eater roamed and was shot by him.

We did not regret it and many were the memories we carried away with us in addition to over 300 lb. of fish which made our trip worth while.

Chaknakal is approximately 4 miles above Gairal through the deep Gorge—where, two miles below Chaknakal the Mandal river joins the Ramganga. To reach this spot there is a first class road from Mohan four miles to the check post at Durga Devi where one turns off to the left, then down the forest road, six miles to the Mandal-Ramganga junction. This is rather a deep drop on a fair forest road, and I advise only a station wagon or jeep to risk this road.

Fishing in this area is first class. The gorge is deep with a narrow path on the left bank on the side of the hill. It was on this path that my driver Man Bahadur Thapa met a very large tiger and being alone and very wise he came back quickly although he had to leave behind some very nice fish which we all agreed Mr. Stripes deserved for his lunch instead of a meal of Thapa.

We could have caught many more fish but we were keen on studying the habits of the Mahseer by their re-action to various lures—spoons, plugs etc. Amongst the party we had Capt. MacGready (IN) an expert 'Skin Diver' who saw fish, Goonch, Mully, Indian Trout, Kala-Banse and Mahseer, the latter well over 50 lbs. These were found in the very deep pools below Gairal but after seeing a few Muggar of approximately 10 feet in length in a pool in the gorge we decided our friend should view them from the high banks and not in the water as we were to answer to his wife for his safety and we carried no guns. The fish of the Ramganga in May and June are very shy as the water is very low and clear.

We found that early morning from 6-00 to 9-00 and evening from 5-00 to 7-00 were the best hours and small plug and one or two inch silver spoon in the rapids were most effective. By day only small fish could be caught on Atta.

To really see the big fish and study them one must have a Skin diving outfit—Mask—Snorkel and Flippers and a float. With this equipment one can really see big fish in the deep water but it must be remembered that there are muggar also in these waters.

The best fish of the party on spoon in the Ramganga was a 22 lb. thick-lipped Mahseer caught by that well known shikari and big game shot Col. P. N. Rana who was by far the most successful of us all.

In the Ramganga Div. the courtesy extended to us by all forest personnel was remarkable and fully appreciated. Even assistance was offered us and great credit must be given to the forest guards for their vigilance and sense of duty in the prevention of forest fires.

Although Ramnagar Div. is not in the National Park it was a pleasure to see Jungle Fowl, Pheasant and other most beautiful birds, Sambhar, Kakar, Cheetal, Pig—and during our ten days stay not one incident of poaching did we observe other than on the Kosi River. During one of our visits to Chaknagal we were resting just above the Mendak junction when three Goral rushed down the hill side in front of us followed by a large Panther.

The Goral and Panther were as much surprised as we were and I am glad to see the Goral got away and the Panther, not too pleased with us, gave a few grunts and disappeared up the hill. Among our party there were keen photographers as you will see by the prints published with this article but unfortunately 'spots' was camera shy.

During our stay three of our party went up to Naini Tal via Kaladungi on the new forest road and were able to visit the home of Col. Corbett after whom The Corbett National Park is named. There was no one in residence except the mali who serves as a care-taker. A photo of Col. Jim. Corbett's house is shown with this article.

The day before we broke camp, we visited the Corbett National Park. From the main Ranikhet road Dikala is 19 miles. The road was motorable but at that time of the year quite dusty.

The forest guards were most polite and helpful and took the trouble to inform us that there were wild elephants 3 to 5 miles ahead, this caused a little excitement among the ladies in the party and although we did not encounter 'Jumbo' there was every evidence of him being around, as plenty of fresh droppings were on the road and two sign posts had been up-rooted.



Studying the fish in the deep pool of Ramganga by "Skin-diving."

—Photo by Major Mainwaring.



Netting by the Village Panchayat at the Lala Devi Dutt Pool below the Bungalow at Kumaria. It will be seen that the net covers the river from bank to bank. This explains why fishing in the Kosi is nearly finished.

—Photo by Major Mainwaring.



Col. Jim Corbett's House at Kaladungi near Haldwani.

—Photo by Mrs. Mainwaring.



Carting into the Gorge at the Mendak junction with the Ramganga.

—Photo by Mrs. Mainwaring.

We arrived at the park at dawn and it was a sight that will live in my memory forever—Sambhar, Kakar, Pig, Cheetal Stags, Doe and Fawn were seen in large herds on both sides of the road and on the thappar. We decided to go on to Buxar, where we saw from the high banks good fish and a nine foot muggar.

We breakfasted at Buxar and then visited the tourist bungalow and guest house at Dikala. These are beautifully built and although expensive, they offer every comfort to the tourist. Here again the forest staff were courtesy itself.

At the Park Mr. Negi invited us to stay and see the herd of 15 odd elephants. My wife did not favour this proposal, so we started for home meeting more pig and Sambhar on the way back.

The Park, to be fully appreciated, should be visited in March or April and not less than two days should be spent inside the Park. We had no opportunity to use the look-outs provided for the tourists and from here to watch and study wild life, nor was the lighting suitable for photography during our few hours stay.

All in all the trip was interesting and it was clearly seen that the Forest Department is doing its best to preserve wild life, but they need more co-operation from us who do not always realise how much money, labour and planning goes into the maintenance of forest roads, rest houses and tourist bungalows and Parks etc.

So here on behalf of the whole party I extend our thanks to the Forest Department with a hope that they will receive every encouragement in this great endeavour to preserve wild life.

Maj. E. G. Mainwaring,
Cambrian Hall,
Dehra Dun.

International Aid For Wild Life

Readers of the "CHEETAL" have probably been following the campaign to save Africa's wild life, spearheaded by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. Under its African Special Project, an international conference was held at Arusha in Tanganyika in September 1961, which has been described as a "milestone in the history of the development of an awareness of the need for the scientific conservation of nature and natural resources in Africa". A feature of the conference was the manifesto put out by the Government of Tanganyika.

This Arusha manifesto expresses in clear terms the attitude of the host Government of Tanganyika towards the conservation and development of its wild life and wild land resources. It epitomises also the tone of the discussions throughout the Pan-African Symposium on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States, which constituted the second stage of IUCN's African Special Project (A.S.P.).

The meeting was attended by 140 participants from 21 African and 6 non-African countries and 5 international organisations, not counting CCTA and IUCN who were jointly responsible for the preparation of the conference. In his opening address His Excellency Sir Richard Turnbull, Governor of Tanganyika, who combines first-hand knowledge of the general deterioration of the environment with considerable experience in the human and social problems of modern African states, spoke in terms of the disaster which will inevitably descend on the people of a country if its natural renewable resources are not intelligently managed. He stressed the fact that the conservation of wild animals, an undoubtedly great national asset, was dependent upon one overriding consideration—the conservation of the habitat. He acknowledged that in many areas man and his domestic animals were multiplying unchecked to bring about their own ultimate destruction by ruining forever the land on which they live. And after outlining the wild life policy of the Government of Tanganyika and the various problems which this raised, he summarised the situation under three main considerations: (1) wild life and wild nature were an undoubted source of revenue needed for the government's social services, and must, therefore, be rationally "exploited" where this was the best form of land use; (2) public opinion, whose support was essential, must be convinced of the value of this special African heritage; and (3) international aid would be needed if the world in general wished to see Africa's unique fauna preserved for the benefit of the people of Africa.

In the light of numerous and diverse offers of technical and financial help, the conference stressed the overriding need for ensuring that such necessary assistance be channelled in such

a way as to avoid wasteful application and thus encourage outside aid. It, therefore, warmly commended the implications of Stage III of IUCN's African Special Project (ASP) as an essential follow-up to the conference and the change of attitude which the conference has so clearly brought forth.

The establishment of the team of two specialist consultants, comprising this Stage III of IUCN's A.S.P. was considered as the only effective means whereby situations and needs in Africa could be analysed and properly assessed, priorities determined and help from outside adequately and impartially channelled.

Other recommendations and wishes formulated by the conference related (1) to the subject of international aid for education and training in conservation at all levels; (2) to land-use policies which should aim at avoiding the intensive occupation of land unsuited for such use in the long term; and (3) to the need for greater attention to the economics of resource development programmes. The conference also expressed its warmest congratulations to the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville) for its exemplary attitude towards its National Parks. Finally, the wish was expressed that countries assist in creating throughout Africa a systematic type collection of natural habitats. This subject has been proposed as a major theme for IUCN's 1963 African General Assembly.

Professor Baer, President of IUCN, said during the inaugural session, "Man in the past, out of sheer ignorance or greed, has wastefully destroyed plant and animal life, forgetting that neither he nor his children's children can ever become completely independent of their environment, and overlooking the possible contribution that these now extinct forms might have made to his own welfare."

Stage III of the African Special Project has since commenced. It consists of a working team of two scientists who during 1962 will on invitation visit African countries, to advise on wild life policies and help to integrate such policies into the general conservation programmes. They will deal with both animals and plants and with scientific, cultural and economic matters simultaneously.

India needs both international interest and international aid, if her wild life problems are not to find a solution in a few microscopic sanctuaries and parks. A "Delhi Conference on Indian Wild Life" on international lines would be a 'shot in the arm' for India's wild life. A "Save India's Wild Life Fund", which would enable many of those who in the past have had a good time shooting and fishing in India to 'put something back in the kitty', could be raised to finance publicity and propaganda, without which the teeming millions of India will remain ignorant of the aspects of the problem. Wild life in India is receiving extremely

low priority and is almost a forgotten item in the development plans of the country and unless much more attention is paid to it the situation will deteriorate to the point of no return. If the authorities will not act, let the non-official organisations and public opinion in India take up the challenge.

P.D.S.

A Few Thoughts About Our Wild Life

Mammals.

During the past, extensive undisturbed areas of forest gave shelter to wild animals and provided guarantee of their survival. But rapidly changing conditions in the country which include the gradual cutting down of the forest area, construction of roads, buildings, dams and other projects in the wilderness have left no areas in our Peninsula which are free from the intrusion of man. These factors which are necessary for the progress of the country are on the other hand having a disastrous effect on wild life. Danger to our wild life has increased in recent years with modern sportsmen shooting from Jeeps with the help of spot lights.

We have always looked upon beasts of prey as creatures to be destroyed. But in reality, the role they play in maintaining the balance of nature proves that they have a distinct value. They control the overpopulation of species whose unchecked increase would prove harmful to man. On the other hand if the beasts of prey do not find sufficient food they become a danger to man and are, therefore, destroyed. The balance of nature provides the correct ratio between carnivora, herbivora and omnivora but man is responsible for spoiling this ratio and it is he who suffers the most for doing so.

The wild life of our country is a source of sport and enjoyment to the people and constant attraction to visitors. To some extent it is a source of income to the Government from the sale of shooting permits. At the same time it is an asset which may vanish, without our efforts to preserve it. In western countries fauna is considered a great asset, an asset which is protected for the advantage of the present and future generations. In its fauna and flora nature has given India a magnificent asset, which we are responsible for preserving.

It is a known fact that there are more than 500 different species of mammals found in our country, the biggest being the elephant and the most colourful, the little painted bat. The gaur or Indian bison is the largest existing bovine and the great Indian rhinoceros, the greatest of all the rhinos in the world. Amongst the deer, the sambur, cheetal, thamin and swamp deer could be classed as the most beautiful. The beauty of the Indian gazelle or chinkara is well known throughout the world. The three antelopes we have the nilgai, black buck and the four horned antelope are the only representatives of these genera. Amongst the beasts of prey the lion, tiger and panther are the most magnificent of all the great cats.

But unfortunately some of the above species found in our State are threatened with extermination. The adjoining forest area between the old Bastar and Hyderabad states not so long back had a considerable number of bison and now this bovine has more or less vanished from there. (See 'It Happened in India'). Upto about 1947 it was quite common to see hundreds of black bucks on the outskirts of the Hyderabad city, especially in Saroonagar and Uppal areas, and in 1952 it was not possible to find the hoof marks of a single buck. At this rate of destruction it will not be wrong to guess that within fifteen to twenty years from now the black buck and chinkara (the only Indian gazelle) will also disappear. (The Tibetan gazelle is still, we believe, found in parts of Ladak, which is part of India, though we cannot say whether Chinese maps agree with us on this point). It is said that the hunting leopard or cheetah was quite frequently met with in the Deccan about a hundred years back, but from the beginning of this century the name of this unfortunate carnivora has been wiped out from Indian wild life. If protection is not offered to our panther at this stage, it will meet the same fate as the cheetah.

Birds.

It is a well known fact that birds can exist without man but man would perish without birds. Birds play a very important role in checking the over-population of insects and pests which do considerable damage to man and his property. Entomologists say that there are over 30,000 different forms of insects in our country and their multiplication is checked by different species of birds which are about ten times less in number. If the over-population of insects is not checked they would overwhelm all life on this planet. A German ornithologist states that a single pair of tits with their family, destroy annually atleast 150,000 caterpillars and pupæ. White storks and rosy pastors, more or less, live on locusts which are a menace to our crops.

Birds of prey like kites, owls, kestrels and hawks are not liked by man because of their taste for poultry and other feathered game. It should be realised that birds of prey are Nature's check upon rodents which are not only destructive pests but also responsible for the spread of certain diseases.

Birds, apart from being agents for flower pollination, are dispersers of seed. It is said that birds were the chief agents for spreading the lantana weed into India from Ceylon where it was introduced about a century ago.

Circumventing of game birds involves a lot of hard work and because of this reason there are few who are interested in this sport. This does not mean that feathered game should not be offered protection. The great Indian bustard which is a resident and local migrant of our country is almost extinct. There are still a very few of this species left in our state and, if not preserved, they will vanish very rapidly.

Lateef Mehdi,
M.B.O.U., F.Z.S.

India's National Parks and Sanctuaries

ALL ABOUT KAZIRANGA

Area and Situation :—

The present Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary was originally constituted in 1908 as Kaziranga Game Reserve with 56,544 acres. Subsequently during 1911 an area of 1441.6 acres was de-forested. 13,506 acres in 1913 and 37,529 acres in 1917 were added to make the total present area of 1,06,137.4 acres or 165.84 sq. miles. During 1953 the word "Game" was replaced by "Wild Life" Sanctuary. Also in the same year a Protected Belt of the Sanctuary has been declared covering an area of 210 square miles (approximate) including the Sanctuary area, from Jakhalbandha to Bokakhat, the area lying north of the National Highway. Proposals are afoot to upgrade the Sanctuary into one of the National Parks of India.

The Sanctuary is situated in the Brahmaputra valley bounded by the mighty Brahmaputra, the artery of Assam in the north and the National Highway (South Assam Trunk Road) on the south within the Sibsagar Forest Division of Assam. The snow clad mountains of the Himalayas in the north form the northern background and the ranges of the Mik Hills lying south of the Trunk Road form the base of the Sanctuary. Within this area of panoramic beauty nature with her children unfurls her maiden beauty throughout the year, specially in early spring and winter.

Kohora: Head Quarters of Kaziranga is on the 135/7 mile post of the above National Highway.

Temperature and Rainfall:

The maximum temperature of the place is 94°F and the minimum 45°F.

The average annual precipitation of the last 10 years is shown to be 93.1", maximum being 16" in July and the minimum 0.2" in December.

Transport Facilities:

The North East Frontier Railways with Jakhalabondha station on the branch line from Chapormukh Junction, approximately 32 miles from Jakhalabondha Station to Kohora, is the rail connection to the place.

Rowriah: Approximately 60 miles via Jorhat is the nearest air-port.

The following transport is available:—

- (i) A Tourist Car maintained by the department at Jorhat with charge of 0.50 Naye paise per mile.
- (ii) State Transport Service to and from Shillong/Gauhati/Nowgong/Jorhat/Dibrugarh and
- (iii) Local Taxi.

The road route distances are as follows:—

From Jorhat	...	...	...	55 miles
Nowgong		...	...	60 miles
Gauhati	...	...	...	135 miles
Shillong	...	...	...	179 miles

Accommodation:

(i) The Kaziranga Tourist Lodge (Lachit Bhawan) located on a hillock on 135/7 mile post on the National Highway overlooking the Sanctuary on the north, 5 double-bedded rooms with attached bath and sanitary fittings, one dining room, one lounge, electrified, with catering both Indian and European styles and linen supplied.

(ii) Baguri Inspection Bungalow— 7 miles west of Lachit Bhawan—on the side of the National Highway—2 double bedded rooms with attached bath and sanitary fittings. Oil-lamps provided, catering as under Lachit Bhawan. Provision for electricity is being made. Linen supplied.

(iii) Arimora Inspection Bungalow—approximately 10 miles north of Lachit Bhawn within the Sanctuary on the bank of the Brahmaputra—3 double bedded rooms with attached bath and sanitary fittings. No catering and no linen.

(iv) Tourist Bungalow No. 2 on the side of Lachit Bhawan having 8 double-bedded rooms with all the above facilities, as in Lachit Bhawan with lower rates.

(v) Another V.I.P. Hostel is proposed to meet the increased demand of visitors to be constructed near Beguri during 1962-63.

View Season:

All the year round animals can be seen by visitors. But the best season is from October to March. After the grass is burnt in January new shoots come up and during this period visitors can enjoy the best view of rhinos and other animals from far and near. The best time is the early morning from 5 A.M. to 8 A.M. or the afternoon from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. Visitors are taken from the Bungalows at 4 A.M. in the morning or 2-30 P.M. in the afternoon on departmental trained elephants fitted with enjoyable (sic!) guides. One can see herds of buffaloes from a distance of 50', rhino from 10' and flock of deer from 90' from the elephant's back. They are almost tame now-a-days. The visitors can click their cameras at leisure.

Type of Fauna:

The most important species that attract the attention of the world is the famous one-horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) commonly known as the Asiatic or Indian Rhino—the home of the species in the world largely sustained in the Sanctuary. The description of the species is given below.

The great animal reaches a height of over 6' at the shoulder and a length of more than 14'. The weight of a large adult may be as much as 2 tons. There is a single horn thick at the base and often quite blunt at the end, averaging to 8/9 inches in length. The longest horn collected so far in the Sanctuary is 19 inches which is kept for exhibition purposes. But horns upto 2' length are also said to have been collected. A thick hide hangs in great folds at the neck, shoulders and hind quarters giving the appearance of an armoured plate. The fold in front of the shoulder does not continue all the way across the back of the neck, as it does in the slightly smaller Javan rhinoceros. Like the Javan, there are folds continuing across the back behind the shoulder, in front of and across the thigh and around the neck. The legs emerge from beneath the other folds, looking far too slight for the weight they must carry. The legs, the flanks and occasionally the sides of the body are studded with large, round rivet-like tubercles which further add to the armoured appearance. The



Rhinos from a distance of 20' from elephant's back.

—Photo by L. C. Das.

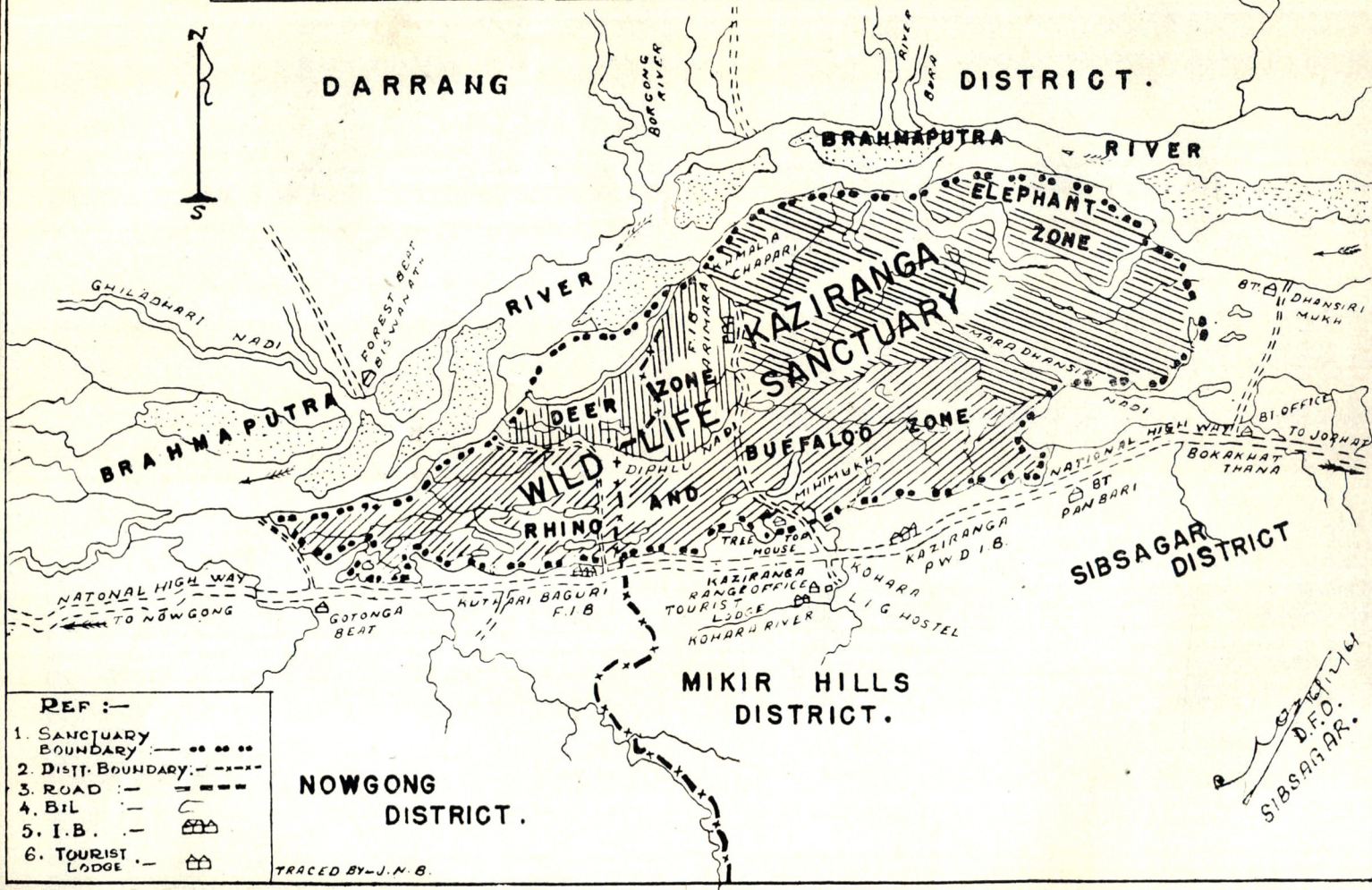


Buffaloes in herd over Water Hyacinth.

—Photo by Dr. R. N. Banerjee.

A MAP OF KAZIRANGA WILD-LIFE SANCTUARY

Scale: - 4" = 1 INCH = 4 MILES



skin is hairless, except for a string of hair on the ear-tips and tails. As with other rhinos, the colour is usually determined by the mud of its most recent wallow. The unusual individual that happens to be clean perhaps just having swam a river, is brownish grey with a very slightly pink or reddish tinge to the edges of the skin folds, ear and nostrils. It has got very poor eye-sight, but it is endowed with tremendous power of hearing and for this God has blessed it with the power of rotating the ears according to its will. The presence of a rhino in a submerged state in marshy land is indicated by the number of white egrets sitting over it.

The rhino has religious, medicinal and commercial values. There is a common belief among our people that if one can touch the horn of a living rhino one is assured of Heaven. There are also certain legends about the rhino as God's vehicle. This was the vehicle of Lord Shri Krishna who has left the imprint of His carpet used over the animal which forms the appearance of armoured plate as mentioned above. This was also the vehicle of Lord Buddha while he spread his immortal preaching after the attainment of "Siddhi." The flesh of the animal is considered sacred. Every part of the animal finds place in medicine. Even the hide, hair, skin, nails, offal are not spared. The urine is sold in a place like Calcutta in small bamboo vials. It has got a very good hygienic habit to be imitated by men, that it passes its offal in one place of the forest. Whatever distance it goes, at the time of nature's call it will come to the same place.

The most valuable part of the rhino is the horn. It is a commodity of foreign trade. Many prized articles like buttons, belt plaques, scabbards are made from rhino horn. In China libation cups are curved out of rhino horn for use in religious ceremonies. It is a common belief that poison when poured into such a cup becomes harmless. Still others believe that one becomes immune to poison if one can drink always from such a cup. As medicine the horn is widely used as an aphrodisiac. China provides the biggest market for this. A mixture containing horn powder in coconut oil is widely used for removing thorn from palms, to ease child-birth, shrink lumps, stop infection, close cuts, soothe irritation, and cure many other ailments. In China there are lots of travelling medical men who carry rhino medicines. These medicines are so popular that as soon as such a medical man enters a village the news breaks out within a short time and the villagers rush to the spot to bargain.

It was apprehended that the number of rhino in Kaziranga went on decreasing from the time of its constitution, but no proper assessment could be made till the beginning of the fifties when the total strength was estimated at a little over 200. But the actual census conducted in 1960 revealed that the strength increased to 398. This increase is in the teeth of

poaching activities in the recent past and natural mortality due to bull-fights, hyper-indulgence in mating, natural death due to old age, and babies eaten by tigers. It can be ensured that the number will go on increasing when poaching is completely stopped and the habitat is improved, which is being done. It is estimated that a rhino dies its natural death at the age of 110 years. There is no fixed period of interval for its reproduction. The gestation period is 19 months. It is interesting to observe that a male rhino can go up to kill a female if his sex is not fully matured at the time of mating. An eye witness on 7-3-50 revealed that mating lasts for one hour 20 minutes. This unique animal has a great demand in the world to-day.

People from all over the world come all the way to see by themselves this majestic threatened-with-extinction species of the world. The following statistics reveal the growing popularity showing the annual number of visitors.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Indians</i>	<i>Foreigners</i>	<i>Total</i>
1956-57	631	294	925
1957-58	820	316	1,136
1958-59	1,152	364	1,516
1959-60	1,288	402	1,690
1960-61	<u>1,738</u>	<u>353</u>	<u>2,091</u>
Total	5,629	1,729	7,358

Here are included many V.I.Ps. of the world.

The other species that can be seen are herds of elephants, wild buffaloes, hundreds of swamp deer, hog deer, barking deer; also a few spotted deer, tigers, bears, pigs, and wild dogs. Monkeys are in great number.

Hundreds of varieties of birds are seen such as pelicans, all species of migratory ducks in winter, brahmany duck, florican, pheasant, black partridge, horn-bill, imperial pigeon and other various species.

The monitor lizard and python are also seen.

Large fish of various species are found in plenty in the numerous small beels and jheels of the Sanctuary. The main types are Indian Carps (Rohu-Labeo rohita, Mrigal-Girrhina mrigala, Mali-Catla Catla and Kalbasu-Labeo Calbasu) and murrel (Sal-Ophicephalus marulius, Sal-Ophicephalus, Stria Cheetal-Notopterus Chitala, Boal-Wallago atu etc.), the first being found in those beels with sandy beds and the latter in those with clayey beds.

There are two beels where very large fish in abundance show above the surface of the water during any part of the day and night—a sight worth seeing.

Any Other Information:

Watch Towers are there in the sanctuary to have a wide range of vision apart from a number of well trained elephants with comfortable gaddies for service to the visitors to carry them to the midst of herds of rhinos and other animals.

The long continuous snow range of the Himalayas is another glory visible throughout the winter from the lodge.

An artificial lake tapping the natural Kohora stream is proposed to be constructed in front of Lachit Bhawan during 1961-62 where angling and swimming, boating and swimming facilities will be provided for the visitors.

Schedule of Rates:

(i) Lachit Bhawan : Accommodation:

- (a) 3 upstairs rooms, Rs. 4.00 per seat or Rs. 7/- per room.
- (b) 2 ground floor rooms, Rs. 3.00 per seat or Rs. 5/- per room.
- (c) Electric light/fan charges, Re. 1/- per diem per seat or Rs. 2/- per room.
- (d) Linen charges, Rs. 2/- per person for not more than 3 consecutive days. (Option of use by visitors.)

(ii) Baguri Inspection Bungalow:

- (a) Rs. 2/- per seat per diem plus price of oil for providing lamps.
- (b) Linen Rs. 2/- per person for not more than 3 consecutive days. (Option of use by visitors.)

(iii) Arimora Inspection Bungalow:

- (a) Re. 1/- per diem.

Tourist Bungalow No. 2:— Rates moderate, less than in Lodge.

Visit to Sanctuary:

- (1) Elephant Hire:— (a) Rs. 10.00 per animal for use by a single visitor.
- (b) Rs. 16.00 per animal for use by two visitors.
- (c) Rs. 16.00 per animal for use by three visitors.

(2) View Fee:

Rs. 5.00 per diem per person.

Rs. 2.00 per diem per Govt. Official, drawing pay less than Rs. 150.00 per month.

Re. 1.00 per diem per student.

Re. 0.50 per diem per student for a group of students under the auspices of an educational institution.

(3) Camera Fee:

(a) Cine Camera Rs. 10.00 per diem for professionals.

(b) Rs. 5.00 per diem for amateurs.

(4) Road Fee:

(a) Rs. 3.00 for Jeep or ordinary Car for journey from Mihimukh to Arimor or part and back.

(b) Rs. 7.50 per Truck or Bus for journey from Mihimukh to Arimora or part and back.

Conveyance:

Tourist Car stationed at Jorhat Rs. 0.50 per mile (Minimum Rs. 10.00 per single visitor or Rs. 13.00 per trip or more.)

How to obtain Reservation:

Intending visitors should address the Divisional Forest Officer, Sibsagar Division, P.O. Jorhat, Assam, India (Phone No. Jorhat 8.)

The Rogues of Assam

By W. LOWRIE CAMPBELL

(Continued from the last issue of "The Cheetal," April 1962)

All was quiet when we got to John's farm, so Wilbur, the two girls (Harriet Spencer and Stanley Gregory) and I stretched on the ground to sleep at about eleven o'clock at night. Edson, Bill and Gerry were to go out for a while to see if the elephants might come back. They went east toward the river. Sleep didn't take long in overcoming us, but it didn't hold us for long either. I awakened to pandemonium and don't remember what I heard first, but there were men shouting, elephants screaming and fire-crackers popping (those are used as a last resort to frighten elephants). Within two minutes the three men on patrol came running through our bivouac, shedding warm clothing as they went, and racing on, now joined by Wilbur, to the area of commotion. I had agreed (quite happily) to stay with the girls at the cars in case of excitement, with the job of keeping them company but also of trying to move the cars if things go too close. (An enraged elephant has too often taken it out on a shiny car). We spread an air mattress on the tailgate of one of the jeep station-wagons and huddled against the cold and excitement, not knowing what would happen next, although the night was now quiet. In half an hour or so, a couple of the boys came running in with the word that both the crooked tusker and the mukhna were feeding about 300 yards away, and I was to come and help out with my gun. I went, though with mixed feelings, as I was happy guarding the harem in spite of a disturbing urge to be closer to the excitement. I found Wilbur and Edson, who gave the picture of the two elephants feeding in the next field as observed with the glasses. The crooked tusker was nearest us and the mukhna beyond him. Edson and Wilbur would fire on the tusker and I was to hit the mukhna if I could and be ready for anything he might do. The two rogues were now feeding very close to the hut (now rebuilt) wherein the little boy had been injured. There was a nice long, but low bush near this hut, later measured at less than 20 yards, so we crawled up behind it, sure we were making too much noise. The slight breeze favoured us, which, plus the noise of their own eating, must have prevented the elephants from knowing we were there. As we got up and levelled our guns, I couldn't see the mukhna at all as he was straight beyond the hut and the tusker, so I decided to get one in on the visible target. We held our fire for Wilbur again and fired almost with him. The huge tusker half turned away, then fell on top of the hut, crushing it like a paper house. Subsequent events are rather blurred. I tried to switch quickly to the mukhna which was running for the jungle on the west and got in two shots. The tusker got up and ran past us headed in the same direction, but he fell heavily after about ten

yards, just short of the road which bisects the valley. Wilbur, showing spectacular nerve, darted behind the downed tusker and pounded one into his spine to hold him. The tusker was still showing a lot of life, so it was quickly decided I would stay there to keep him down while Wilbur and Edson ran after the mukhna. As Edson ran after Wilbur, the tusker started waving his huge legs and came to a sitting position. Edson came back quickly to help me and we hit the brute in the head again, but to no avail, as he lunged to his feet and swung purposefully toward us. You should have seen two well-padded city boys jack-rabbit out of there! We didn't go far, because the elephant started off for the woods again, stumbling and falling as he went. By this time we were low on cartridges, so we got some more from the cars and did some talking. Both animals had reached the jungle grass and disappeared. Wilbur had heard the tusker fall again inside the jungle and emit what sounded like a death gasp. The mukhna, on the other hand, had not shown any sign of being hurt. We figured out that the tusker had been hit nine times and the mukhna about three.

This time it was Edson's turn to stay with the girls. The rest of us took one jeep and drove down to, and then up, the tea garden road. As we went along slowly, approximately near the place where the rogues had entered the jungle, we heard a commotion near us on the valley side, which gave away the position of at least one elephant. Driving a little way on, Wilbur wisely suggested one man get out there to watch and listen. Being closest to the door, I drew the job and reluctantly got out while the others drove on out of sight around the curve in the road. I heard an elephant cracking branches and feeding quite close by, simultaneously realizing that I and the others, plus the jeep, were now upwind to him. When the others came quietly down towards me, we decided to take the jeep back down the road while we ran beside it, to cover the sound of our feet as we went past the hidden elephant. Once past, the jeep went on while Wilbur and I stopped to see what would happen next. We didn't have to wait long as the elephant started thrashing out to the road, having heard the car pass. He was closer than we figured, so we prudently, and rapidly, backed up away. The elephant, the mukhna, crashed out on to the road and started menacingly in our direction. He then stopped, because we had stopped too, and he could no longer hear, see, or smell us. I had hopped into the ditch along the side of the road, then had a bad moment when I bumped into an old tea garden wire fence. My hand felt up the fence beside me and I was relieved to find it a low one. I pressed down the top strands as quietly as I could—just in case. Wilbur was beside me and a bit above on the edge of the road and after a few, very still, tense moments, decided to try a frontal shot under the skull. It was pretty dark there under the overhanging trees, and he didn't hit quite right, but the elephant swung sideways, giving me an ear shot and then a heart shot. None of these seemed to do much damage and off he went back into the woods beside us. Thinking the tusker was lying dead somewhere

short of the road, and knowing it was useless to do more about the mukhna in thick, black tree growth, we hiked down to the car and drove back to Edson and the girls.

There was a brief discussion on the desirability of going back to base for some sleep. It was then 4 a.m. Since we were sure the tusker was down nearby, we decided to sleep where we were and get some pictures. This was Thanksgiving morning and the Spencers and the Gregorys had to be on their way back to Calcutta by 11 a.m. This meant there would be no opportunity to return to the shooting scene later in the morning. One hour's sleep, and we were all up with the dawn.

Here I wish to interject a small comment on the law of supply and demand. The only variety of toilet paper which had been available at home when we left Calcutta was pink. Dawn greeted us with a horizontal Christmas-tree effect on the green grass around us, easily diagnosed as the result of hurried little trips (to safe distances only) such as are normally necessary to both boys and girls during moments of great stress and nervousness! After appropriate remarks on this exterior decorating, we started off confidently to take pictures of the dead tusker rogue.

Over a hundred farmers and their sons were already stirring and many were searching the high grass jungle for the carcass. But no dead elephants. There were great crushed grass areas with blood stains and fresh elephant droppings, but no elephant. He had fallen three times inside the grass jungle, but had gone on to the heavy undergrowth across the tea estate road. This seemed unbelievable to all of us, but certainly no one could have made off with a dead elephant!

As we pressed our search into the woods across the tea road, surrounded now by a swarm of local villagers, we looked up to see a surge of people sprinting toward us, but being followed by nothing. It turned out that the foremost few of the searchers had stumbled upon the mukhna in the woods and had been briefly pursued by him, which set off a chain reaction so that people a quarter of a mile away eventually found themselves turning loose their best talents in the track department, more or less on speculation. This illustrated to us the vast respect with which bad elephants are treated by these defenceless people, who know their unpredictable ways. We followed to where the mukhna had been seen and sent a man up a tree. A report of his nearby presence sent Wilbur and Edson up the tree for a look too. The rogue had moved off into the high grass a short distance and presented a poor shot at any vital part. So, with varying degrees of reluctance, we broke off the pursuit, with the idea of bringing up our hunting elephants later in the day from whose backs we thought we could finish the mukhna and perhaps find the dead, or dying, tusker.

We were a bone-tired and somewhat disconsolate crew driving back to our base at Harisingha. We had come to realize that a high powered rifle, even at close range, is relatively useless unless fired through a small opening to the brain, or steered through the rib casing, partly by luck, to the heart. We also knew we had wounded two elephants and that at least one of them was able to visit the fields that night, in a nastier mood than ever before—a potential threat of terrible damage to life and property. Part of our group was leaving, which in itself is always dejecting if you have all had as good a time together as we had, but doubly so when there were other factors adding to the gloom, including two days and nights without sleep.

We started back to the scene of action after the travellers had left to catch their plane in Tezpur. The two hunting elephants had been dispatched, first to roll the body of the first tusker into a huge pit which had been dug for it, and then to proceed to the tea estate road at the point where the mukhna had crossed. Wilbur, Gerry, and I arrived at 2 p.m. to find out from men who had been watching him all day, that the mukhna was within stone's throw of where we were standing. There were vastly conflicting stories of the situation, including one to the effect that the wounded tusker and several other elephants were there with him. Climbing a tall tree we counted trunks for ourselves and discovered the wounded mukhna in high grass with two other elephants nearby, neither of which were tuskless. Again a council of war as to what we were going to do. My spirit was pretty lame and I was having trouble thinking of anything positive to do, except employing that well-known manoeuvre of "getting the H—out of there!" The mahout of our tame tusker (the other was tuskless) was all for going out in the grass and tangling with the wild herd. I demurred, on the basis that we knew more about the limitations of the guns we had than he did. (The Assamese take pot shots at wild elephants with shotguns and complain when they don't promptly collapse). Also, there was no unanimity of opinion regarding the probable reactions of the mukhna's companions. One mahout's opinion was that they would charge into a fight, while the other one was sure they would run when the shooting began. Finally, it turned out that the alarmist mahout wasn't quite sure of himself or his mount in a wild elephant fight and that the more confident man was speaking from experience. This assurance, plus a refusal by the experienced mahout to move unless there were two of us, thawed out my reluctance over the odds, and the next thing we knew was that Sorley and I were riding on our elephants into the big high grass field, surrounded on three sides by trees in which a hundred villagers were perched like crows to see the sport.

Gerry Hyde had only a deer rifle and so wisely did not ride with one of us, thereby allowing greater manoeuvrability. Wilbur was on our tame tusker with the more daring of the two mahouts. I was on the tame mukhna which was leery of wild elephants but fearless

of tigers, while the tusker was jumpy around tigers but not afraid of elephants. From downwind we rode toward the mukhna rogue and one of his companions, which was practically leaning on him. The other friend was thirty yards beyond these two and not clearly visible to us. I experienced a completely new personal sensation on this ride out of the trees and into the vicinity of these wild elephants. Perhaps it is best compared to the calm which exists at the center of a cyclone. To say that I had the jitters before we finally agreed to go in is rather an understatement—I was frankly frightened to death. Yet, as we caught sight of the mukhna, I became aware of a feeling of calm and clear-headedness which surprised me. It was like going for a Sunday drive. This was due, I am sure, to numbness more than anything else. As we got to within about forty yards range, the mukhna came to life in a slow motion surge and came straight for us, closely accompanied by his immediate friend. Wilbur and I opened up on him as he came, hitting him three times in what later proved to be a three-inch cluster on his forehead. He didn't even hesitate in his stride and barged into Wilbur's mount, which had waded straight for him. My elephant shied away a few steps and I saw the mukhna's pal in full retreat, along with the third wild one. There was a good deal of confusion at this point, with the mahouts yelling at their animals and me yelling at my mahout because we were directly behind Sorley and my gun was useless. The mukhna and Wilbur's tusker had locked trunks and were grappling and shoving. I got around the tangle and got another shot, apparently to no avail, then Wilbur leaned forward past his mahout, placed the muzzle of his gun close to the mukhna's forehead and fired. First the hindquarters sagged, then the rogue went suddenly limp and fell dead on his side. The peace and quiet were wonderful and we were both relieved it was over. Wilbur's iron nerve and aggressive clear-headedness were most remarkable, because he also was inexperienced in this elephant business and suffered the uncertainty of not knowing just what to expect. He keenly felt a responsibility to the poor victimized farmers of the area and supplied the singlemindedness and courage to put an end to the affair.

We cruised the jungles for two hours looking for the wounded tusker without ever seeing a sign of him. I have received a letter from Sorley, written several weeks later, that extensive searches by the village people have not turned up a trace of him either, but the fact that he has not been seen since convinces everyone that he is dead. An experienced elephant hunter that we spoke to, who is also a doctor, told us that a mortally wounded elephant will keep going into the most impenetrable jungle until he dies. He also said that the blood in the droppings we had seen meant certain death from peritonitis after a few days. This man advised us never to shoot rogues at night or from elephant-back! Only in daylight and from the ground can the right spot be hit and the proper angle obtained for reaching

the well-protected and comparatively small brain. He said that we were very lucky to kill the first rogue so easily.

The thought of shooting an elephant has never appealed to me and does even less now, but the expressions of gratitude we received and the crowds of people who came in a festive mood from all over the countryside to see these two dead rogues who had preyed upon them for several years, plus the intensity of excitement and sometimes fear which went with the knowledge that these were not ordinary, innocent elephants, has convinced me that rogue elephant hunting and simply shooting wild elephants must be two entirely different sports.

Symposium:

The Future of the Tiger

Jim Corbett gave ten years from the 40's as the time limit within which the finest of the felines would become practically extinct. Circumstances may perhaps belie this prognostication, but it is my opinion that this deplorable consummation is highly probable within a decade or so from now. What he did not visualise was the *apparent* increase in the number of tigers. This increase is attributed to the fewer tigers recorded as shot in the reserved forests since Independence and the consequent multiplication of the species. This reasoning is fallacious as during the last few years the habitat of tigers has drastically changed and the creature of the deepest woods, which used to shun human proximity, now lives in savannahs and pasture land and listens to the roar of tractors. The tigers shot on farm lands are not recorded in the statistics of the Chief Wild Life Warden, U.P.

Why then have tigers (1) apparently increased, (2) changed their habitat? The reason for (1) is two-fold. Firstly, living in the vicinity of humans he is seen more often and hence is presumed to have increased in numbers. This presumption is unreal. Secondly, the forests of Nepal, no longer the hunting preserves of the ruling dynasty and the breeding ground of tigers, are being felled indiscriminately to provide developmental funds and colonisation areas for the struggling democracy. As a consequence the tigers which formerly came over the border in dribbles have now emigrated on a large scale. 'Glorious Chitawan', so vividly described by Smythies, could only produce one tigress for the Queen and that wild

and beautiful valley now resounds to the woodman's axe and the poacher's gun. In India the need for preserving and increasing our forests has been realised, but unfortunately the inadequacy of game preservation staff has resulted in a serious depletion of the tiger's natural food, forcing him into the open, away from his natural haunts, to seek a living at cattle stations.

An equally serious menace has, however, manifested itself—India's hunger for foreign exchange. Where other nations rely on the export of finished goods, we encourage the trigger-happy millionaires of the world to kill this great animal. There are three licensed shikar firms operating in the U.P. They are given all facilities : the choicest of blocks, permission to operate a shooting block for a month, four tigers per block etc. One party proudly informed me that they can and have run three shoots at a time. This arrant commercialisation of sport makes a mockery of the chase for the glory of the kill, and they will go to any lengths of rule-breaking to appease the trophy-hungry moguls from foreign lands. With their equipment and 'know-how' these organisations find it easy to kill their maximum allotment and perhaps more, from amongst the unwary immigrants from Nepal. It will indeed be a sad commentary on Independence when posterity has written off our First Animal !

K. Arjan Singh.

[Editorial Comment: We could not agree more with the greater part of Mr. Arjun Singh's contribution. We only venture to doubt one point: Mr. Arjun Singh speaks of the tiger's natural habitat being the densest forests. Is this entirely true ? We must remember that the tiger came to India, not so very long ago, from Siberia, where he haunted the deep grasslands bordering the great Siberian rivers, where he fed on wild cattle, and where he is still found. On arrival in India he took to the deep forests to avoid the heat, but he has always also been found in the tall Savannah country, such as both sides of the Brahmaputra, and he is very much at home in the grassy alps and thick sholas of the Nilgiri plateau at 7 to 8000 ft. On both sides of the Brahmaputra he fed on wild buffaloes (mostly young ones), swamp deer, hog deer and pig which are abundant in these savannahs. In the U.P. Tarai he is now haunting the grasslands, but his natural prey has been decimated by the farmers and he feeds on cattle, and is, therefore, killed. It is easier to come across tigers on forest roads than in a savannah. It would be interesting to find from Soviet Russia the number of the Siberian tigers still surviving in that country.)

Children's Corner

JIM CORBETT AS I KNEW HIM

By

His sister, MAGGIE CORBETT

From his early childhood my brother had a great love for animals and birds, and if he found a fledgling that seemed to be needing care or an injured bird, he would bring it home and look after it until it was able to fend for itself before letting it go again. As a young boy during his winter holidays at Kaladhungi in the foothills, he delighted in wandering about the jungles which in those days were teeming with wild life and it was then that he began to learn the ways and habits of the birds and animals, to recognise the foot-prints of the various species and to become familiar with their calls, which in time he could imitate so perfectly that they were indistinguishable from the natural calls.

As years went by, he encouraged people, especially the young ones, to be interested in wild life and its preservation and when he took to jungle photography he would often show his cine pictures at schools and colleges and give the boys and girls talks with a view to encouraging them to do what they could themselves towards the preservation of wild life.

On the motion of my brother at a special meeting of the Naini Tal Municipal Board in 1933 the Municipality constituted a bird sanctuary and the killing of all wild birds within municipal limits was forbidden. As the result of this the number and variety increased, until 124 different ones could be counted round about the lake and the surrounding hills, within a distance of five miles of the lake and height of 5000 to 8568 ft.

At the request of my brother, the Principals of the Naini Tal Boys' Schools prohibited the use of catapults and air guns during the nesting season. On our arrival in Kenya he made a small bird sanctuary of our garden. The birds were very responsive and soon came in numbers, glossy starlings, cardinal wax bills, sun birds, thrushes, bulbuls, robins, white-eyed fly catchers, weavers and others, some of which would eat from our hands. People from many parts of the world have taken cine and still pictures of the birds in this small sanctuary.

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BENJAMIN MY MONGOOSE

It was a lucky day for me, the day I bought Benjamin from an old villager. She was then a wee little object who relied on me for food and drink and Mother love. And all that

I gave to her for it was so easy to give; and so she was my constant companion, often in my pocket or inside my clothes, and I guess she knew more about me than I did myself!

She was as mischievous as a child, and once gave me an awful fright, when she fell down from our double-storied home in Hazaribagh. I looked out of the window, fear in my heart, to find her lying senseless on the ground, and feeling sick and scared. I ran down to her. But no, the little heart was ticking alright, faint but steady, and I heaved a huge sigh of relief. Quickly I put an ice-bag on her head, and gave her some homoepathic sugar-pills for shock, for she definitely had mild concussion. That I knew intuitively, even without being a Doctor, and by evening she opened her little eyes and smiled up at me and I smiled back, tears of happiness blurring my vision. So all was well, and by morning Benjamin was up and about, doing all the little things she did before.

Then came the day of my marriage. A friend of mine had gone to the trouble of decorating even Benji's cage, with festoons and balloons, for I had to keep her locked in for there were many guests, and I feared she might get confused. The wedding was over and while the guests were dancing and enjoying themselves my newly acquired husband and I got ready to leave for Ranchi and from there on to Gopalpur for our honeymoon. I remember climbing down the stairway, and there stood Benji in her little cage, upright on her hindlegs with her forelegs together, beseeching me to take notice of her. "Leave her with me, my darling", I can still hear Mummy say, but then I simply could not, for after all no one knew her better than I. So I opened that cage door and up she leaped into my arms and up my sleeve for shelter, and so you see away she went with us.

On our way through Jaipur Benji developed heat stroke. I had ice-cubes on her head and there she lay in her cubby-hole of our new Wolsley car, panting her heart away. But she was tougher than we thought, for she survived all right. At a certain point in our journey we had to entrain the car as the river was not fordable, and it was while we were purchasing the ticket that the booking clerk spied Benji on my shoulder. "What about the pet, Madam"? he said, "it will need a ticket". He looked up on the species of pets listed. "There is nothing mentioned about a mongoose, Madam", he replied, puzzled what to do. And then my husband solved the situation "vermin on person" should do, clerk, he said. A sheepish grin and a ticket was issued forthwith.

At last we reached Gopalpur, and the "Blue-Haven hotel", where we were to stay. Mrs. Moore the proprietress immediately took Benjamin to her heart and she reciprocated by snuggling into Mrs. Moore's ample bosom. She soon rid the hotel of all the lizards and sand crabs and the servants thoroughly spoilt her. In the dead of night, when only the

sound of the waves dashing against the shores could be heard, Benji would stealthily steal down to the foot of the bed and bite my husband's toe. "OOch!" Tootoo would scream, and then he'd put on the light, and exclaim; "Yvonne if I catch that mongoose of yours I'll ring her neck". Pleading innocence, I would look around and say "where is Benji? She is not here", knowing full well that Benji was there all right, up my nightie, not daring to breathe.

Benji enjoyed our honeymoon too, for she partook of all the sports that the seaside resort offered. She accompanied us out deep-sea fishing, surfing the waves in a cattermoran's swimming, and even duck shooting. We always reserved a duck for her, and she would put her little mouth to the neck of the duck, incise two holes and drain out all the blood, like a vampire! She was with us when we were caught out in a storm on lake Chilka. The boat we were in was being tossed about and even the boatmen were alarmed. But we made the shore, and when I got out with Benji on my shoulder I heaved a sigh of relief to tough terra firma once again I can assure you.

It was right there on the sands that Benji completely demoralised us, for there was a snake charmer performing with a fight between a snake and a mongoose. The fight was on and the music was keeping tempo with the fighters. Each time I put Benji down to join in the fight she would retreat, very much frightened and would cling to me. But once the snake was killed, she instinctively sensed it, and down she went, and standing over the snake aggressively looked at the other mongoose, ready to fight for the other's conquest. We were terribly amused and the snake-charmer charmingly excused her saying "she is a butcha yet, mem sahib. Time enough ahead for her to kill snakes". And he was right, for one such fight I witnessed, between Benji and a cobra. The fight took over an hour, each trying to outwit the other. I dared not utter a sound for fear of distracting Benji, and there I stood through it all, letting my nails dig deep into the soft pink of my palms, stifling a sob; but I had no need to fear, for all went well, and there lay the vanquished, dead, while the vanquisher sat licking her paws.*

A rather humorous incident took place one day, and it needs repeating. My Mother-in-law was lying sick in the Cottage Hospital in Patna, a mild attack of paratyphoid, and so we had installed her in a cabin, to ensure a speedy recovery. Well, one day we went to see her taking Benji with us, for she loved Benji and I thought the sight of her might cheer her up. While we were busy chatting, Benji slid down and was nosing around. Suddenly her eyes alighted on a lizard and she gave chase, out of our room and into the room to the next-door

*The bearer of the hotel, always took considerable pains to bring Benji assorted food on a tray, always saying "Madam, here is food for the mousse". When we left I gave him an additional tip saying "Abdul, here is bukshish from the mousse"! An answering smile and big salam were my reward.

patient. I sprang up worried and anxious. Fortunately my friend agreed to retrieve her, and what a sight met his eyes! There lying on the bed was an enormous man, an abdominal patient, all strapped up, and there reclining on his fat stomach was Benji with the lizard in her mouth. She promptly started to eat her kill. The patient shrieked "urrai mia, urrai mia" and called on all the deities to save him. In rushed my friend and I close on his heels. In rushed the matron and nurses. Fortunately, no damage was done, and with a sheepish sweep my friend took Benji and her lizard and we rushed out very much conscious of our guilt. The following day, a notice was up, in bold, big lettering "no pets allowed". Benjamin lived with us, happy and content, and then it was that we were given a dog to keep for a friend of ours, who incidentally never asked back for his pet. And so you see Carlos, as he was named, had no alternative but to remain with us. And with Carlos came trouble, for he was a ratcatcher, and Benji's life became a misery. Many were the beatings I gave him, but he was a shameless little beggar, as shameless as his Master I dare say!

And so Benji took the wide open spaces which are now her home, but she always came if she heard my call. There she would stand erect on her hindlegs with her forelegs together and then she bound right into my arms and snuggle up near my face and lick me with the affection which was her wont.

Once while I was away in Calcutta, my servant heard noises coming from my dressing-table drawer, and sensing a rat, he crept near, his stick held poised to strike. Cautiously he opened the drawer, and there was Benji, with my powder-puff between her front paws, loving it and the smell of it—of me.

And so you see Benji is with me no more. You may well ask "am I not sad to lose her?" and I will reply "why, no, not at all—for you see the last time I saw her she was with her mate, and after all if she is not lonely and unhappy, why should I be".

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"GERTIE"

Our readers will have read in the papers the news of Gertie the tame Indian elephant who, it appears, walked into a public swimming bath, in England and drowned. The "Statesman" suggests that it was suicide caused by home-sickness! We all know that elephants are excellent swimmers, and are known each year to swim across big rivers like the Ganga near Rishikesh, and the Sarda near Tanakpur. Is it possible that 'Gertie', born in the U.K., was never given the opportunity of swimming in water out of her depth, and never developed the capacity? I once owned a labrador puppy, whose first attempt at swimming was so ludicrously inefficient that I had to enter the water to rescue her. She afterwards learnt

to swim like an otter, and was never happier than when swimming in really fast and dangerous rivers. Or was the water too cold for Gertie and did she die of shock? But the Ganga in February when the wild elephants usually cross must be as cold as any English swimming pool in July. What do our readers think?

Editor.

Wild Life Howlers

1. A 'sanctum sanctorum' is a sanctum in a sanctorum.
A 'sanctum sanctorum' is a place kept aside for the mating of wild life in privacy.
2. A tiger is a gentleman-eater while the panther is a goonda-eater.
3. The sloth bear is found above 10,000' and is slothy because of *hibernation*.

"GERTIE"

Our readers will have read in the paper the news of Gertie the tame Indian elephant who it appears walked into a public swimming bath in England and drowned. The 'Stamman' suggests that it was suicide caused by homesickness. We all know that elephants are excellent swimmers and are known each year to swim across big rivers like the Ganga near Rishikesh, and the Ganges near Farakka. Is it possible that Gertie, born in the U.K., was never given the opportunity of swimming in water out of her depth, and never developed the knack? I once owned a Labrador puppy, whose first attempt at swimming was so ludicrously inefficient that I had to enter the water to rescue her. She afterwards learnt

Branch News

The Assam Regional Branch of the Wild Life Preservation Society of India has been steadily increasing its membership which now stands at over fifty. The branch has continued to exert pressure on the local authorities, through recommendations on various aspects of wild life preservation as well as through timely publicity of the same.

The Branch represented to the Assam Government the necessity to amend the Indian Arms Act Rules, so as to empower "forest officers" of the rank of Forester and above to take action in cases of misuse of sporting and crop-protection weapons in areas outside the reserved forests, where alone they are at present empowered to act under the forest act. The Branch also recommended that "confiscation of weapon" be added to the penalties under the Arms Act Rules for misuse of crop-protection weapons and non-observance of close seasons or killing of protected species and that "forest officers" be empowered under the Indian Fisheries Act to take action for offences of dynamiting rivers, which often takes place in the vicinity of reserved forests.

As regards the difficult question of sale of meat of animals or birds illegally taken, it was recommended that the forest acts not only of the Assam State but of N.E.F.A., Nagaland and sixty scheduled 'Autonomous Tribal areas' be suitably amended so as to have a clear definition of "forests" and of "forest produce".

Finally the Branch pointed out to the various authorities of the political units mentioned above that while the existing laws and rules for control of indiscriminate destruction of wild life in areas outside the Reserved and Protected forests were generally adequate, what was lacking was the interest of local civil and police officers in the problem and keenness to take action when necessary. It requested the authorities to issue directions to their officers for the strict enforcement of the law and rules.

The response to the above suggestions, while indicating readiness to cooperate in some cases, is still awaited in others.

Recently (January 1962) the Society, in a letter to the Statesman, supported the outcry at the destruction of elephants by the Mizo Tribal hunters in areas adjoining the Cachar reserved forests and urged the Government to take firm action to protect the elephant and the rhinoceros.

As regards the latter species, which has been revealed to be under severe pressure through clandestine poaching, the communications of the Branch to the local press were largely instrumental in stirring up a public outcry against the alleged slackness of the local forest department. Assam's leading English daily paper was particularly severe on the Government in this connection.

Letters to the Editor

The Editor,

The CHEETAL, Dehra Dun.

Sir,

Honorary Game Wardens.

There are atleast two references to the subject of Honorary Game Wardens in the April issue of your esteemed Journal, and while, in consequence, I am tempted to write this, I crave your indulgence if I happen to be misformed on any points.

As you imply, the importance of the matter requires to be brought home to the authorities in U.P. It would appear to me, however, that their luke-warmness is, perhaps in a measure, due to confusion existing about the exact role and, therefore, the effectiveness with which an honorary game warden could function. You have cited the Assam model. Whatever its merit in Assam, I find it hard to visualise how an honorary officer of the type envisaged in the Assam scheme could be an effective instrument in the cause of game preservation. At best, he will operate as a casual 'game watcher' with a glorified designation.

Under the Assam scheme, the proposed honorary officer would be dependent upon the patronage of the district officials, and we are familiar how, in practice, office superintendents and other petty officials come to play a part in such a system of appointments. I also observe that they will be assistants to the D.F.Os. This, to my mind, sets the pattern at an unduly low level. The fact that the Government of Gujrat had to issue an order entitling honorary game wardens to the use of rest houses would appear to confirm my misgivings. Even in the matter of their limited role, the usefulness of the proposed type of officers becomes a moot point when it is realised that the district officials themselves are perhaps, as serious a menace to wild life as any other class of persons.

In any case, it will be appreciated that the problem of wild life preservation comprises a great deal more than baulking poachers. It is primarily in the sphere of a naturalist, and what is needed is the appointment of advisers—by whatever name called—from amongst persons of status, having experience of wild life and familiar with their locality. Such men alone could be expected to stand up against local influences, and promote game interests.

An honorary, part-time worker cannot satisfactorily discharge executive responsibilities. The task of enforcing the game laws and of implementing constructive measures otherwise

must necessarily remain with the whole-time staff. My conception of an honorary game warden, therefore, is basically that of an adviser, and in the nature of a cushion to the executive against pressures which, not infrequently, deter them from acting freely or independently. With a prosecution started 'under advice' and on evidence adduced by the adviser the regular game warden would feel fortified. He will tend to become more of an implementing agency, as distinct from initiating unpleasant actions. In short, if the advisers are appointed from amongst public men of high standing, who are in a position to contribute to the cause of game preservation, who could not be brow beaten by local officials or politicians, and whose advice the Government will respect, then alone the proposal becomes worth while.

Such officers should be expected to tour their areas extensively, and to this end, they should not only have access to rest houses, but should also be provided with transport facilities; alternatively, re-imbursed for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses—as indeed is the case with honorary appointments in other fields.

It is understandable that the U.P. Government should be against the type presently appointed, e.g. in Assam. It is upto the Wild Life Preservation Society of India to establish a close liaison with the Chief Conservator of Forests at Lucknow, and wherever else it may be necessary. The Society should produce a concrete scheme which will carry conviction. If it cannot enlist his support immediately, there is no reason to despair, but, if it fails to command his confidence, there is something amiss.

Finally, this is by no means an attempt to present a scheme, nor is it my intention to be critical of anything. I have merely tried to discuss some aspects of the proposal to appoint wild life wardens, against my back-ground of U.P. conditions. Administratively, many loose-ends will have to be tied up, and no headway can be made without the cooperation of the Chief Conservator.

Yours truly,
H.L. Khanna.

(Editorial Comments:—(a) Even as a 'casual watcher' an 'Honorary Game Warden' could do something to help, provided that, as suggested, he were a man of some status and knowledgeable about wild life preservation. It has never been suggested that 'Hon. Game Wardens' should be, in the least, 'dependent on the patronage of the district officials'. Heaven forbid!

Frequently in this part of the world, we come across offences against the Game Laws of India, such as bombing of rivers, shooting from a jeep etc. As Hon. Game Wardens we should be able either to intervene on the spot or to report effectively to the D.F.O.

(b) More than two years ago, a 'Wild Life Board' for Dehra Dun and Saharanpur was created, and I was asked to serve on it. Only one meeting has been held since, which I could not attend since it was at 11 A.M. on a Monday morning when I had my work to do.

(c) The appointment of Hon. Game Wardens in the U.P. would at any rate show a cooperative tendency on the part of Government, which has hitherto been conspicuous by its absence.)

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WILD LIFE WEEK IN INDIA

Dear Sir,

One of the functions of the Indian Board for Wild Life is to promote public interest in Wild Life and it was decided in 1956 to celebrate the "Wild Life Week" throughout India in an effective manner.

The Wild Life Week starts on the 1st October every year, but in Delhi it was found that the official shooting season also started on the same date, viz., 1st October. This was, on the face of it, an absurd proposition, as it vitiated the efforts made towards celebrating the Animal Welfare Week. The Delhi administration was, therefore, requested late last year, to open the official shooting season with effect from 8th instead of 1st October as done in the past. They appreciated the point, and are attending to it seriously. The matter was also discussed sometime ago in a committee meeting of the D.S.P.C.A. and it received the general support of the members, although some of them felt that the subject really related to the Wild Life Preservation Societies in India.

As the question is of general interest and of wider application I would request you to publish this letter in your esteemed Journal "Cheetal", and also to take up the idea independently at your own level.

It may also be mentioned that the Postal Department have decided to issue "Wild Life" postage stamps during the next WILD LIFE WEEK. The local administrations in the various states should, therefore, try to make the Week a real success by enlisting the active support of non-official agencies.

Yours faithfully,
Padam Prasad,
Member D.S.P.C.A.,
19, Daryaganj, Delhi.

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*Copy of letter addressed to Shri Padam Prasad, D.S.P.C.A., 19, Daryagang, Delhi,
dated March 16th, 1962.*

Dear Mr. Padam Prasad,

Thank you for your letter which I will publish with Editorial comments in our next issue—the current issue is almost ready for publication, and we cannot add anything to it. The next issue will appear in October.

Personally I do not see that there is anything inconsistent in the shooting season starting on the day that 'Wild Life Week,' or 'Animal Welfare Week' starts. I do not see that it 'vitiates' (your word) Wild Life Preservation in the least, especially when the chief and most active supporters of our Society are the keen and law-abiding Shikaris themselves. Our motto is "Plenty Through Preservation". In other words we are enlisting as our supporters the keen sportsmen, following the brilliantly successful example of the U.S.A. It must not be thought for a moment that Wild Life Preservation means the restriction and frustration of legitimate sportsmen. It must not be suggested that the man who goes on a partridge or duck shoot in the morning and attends a Wild Life Meeting in the evening is a gross hypocrite. He is nothing of the kind. He may be the keenest supporter of Wild Life Preservation.

Soon after our foundation as The Wild Life Preservation Society of Northern India a few years ago, our Sub-committee on 'Legislation' drew up a scheme governing Northern India for Close Seasons and Bag Limitations, based on the opinion of many Shikaris and Forest Officers, the general purpose of which was to see that immature birds were not shot, and that birds and animals should not be shot during the breeding season. Our scheme fell on deaf ears so far as any official bodies were concerned. We are an entirely unofficial body. Our voice, therefore, is the voice of a 'Pelican in the Wilderness'. Nobody listens to us.

If it can be proved that many partridges or ducks are immature on October 1st, but mature on October 8th, I should agree with postponing the shooting season till October 8th. Partridges breed at such irregular times that immature birds may be met with in almost any month. I have myself seen chicks two or three days old in January. Any duck that arrives in India by October 1st must be fully mature; otherwise it could not possibly have made the immense journey from Central Asia to India.

If I may offer a word of advice, it is this: At your Annual Wild Life Meeting addresses are made mainly to the already convinced audiences of keen Wild Life Preservationists. This

is useless. You must preach to the sinners, as Jesus Christ did. You must hold meetings in the barracks of Army Regiments, particularly Gurkhas, who see nothing wrong in using hand grenades intended for the defence of India, for dynamiting fish. You must preach to the P.W.D. who use the vast masses of explosives entrusted to them for the same purpose. You must preach to the villagers who are using their crop-protection licenses for poaching deer and selling their carcasses in the neighbouring town.

We will give our unqualified support to the prevention of senseless and illegal killing of India's Wild Life. In fact that is our main purpose. If that can be achieved there will be no Wild Life problem. But we are not prepared to lend our support to restriction of the shooting season based on sentimental grounds.

Yours sincerely,

R.L. Holdsworth (Editor).

P.S. I am very glad to hear that Wild Life Postage Stamps will be issued next Wild Life Week.

R.L.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The death occurred in Roorkee on the 10th July, 1962, at the age of 88 years, of Mr. H.M. Harrison, one of the first members of the Wild Life Preservation Society and an ardent conservationist. Mr. Harrison was one of those persons of the old school which the Indian scene will see no more: of European extraction, born in India, automatically attracted to Government service and builders of that service in the days of the British rule. He spent all his life in the Punjab where he had ample opportunities to indulge in shikar and where he acquired fame as a great bird shot. On his retirement he spent most of his time at Roorkee, taking shooting trips to the neighbouring forests of the Doon.

As the result of his natural predilections and his experience in the magistracy and secretariat, he was deeply interested in the thwarting of doers of evil against wild life, such as shooting in the close season, shooting female deer etc., and his reports to the authorities in this connection were most helpful. He was one of the first to join the Society and his support and encouragement in its formative period will always be remembered by the writer of this note. At an age when most persons have lost interest in movements of this kind and in a time where many are cynical about the utility of such movements, H.M. Harrison's example is deserving of emulation.

P.D.S.

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THE CHEETAL

JOURNAL OF THE WILD LIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF INDIA

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